

DAVY CROCKETT

WILLIAM C. SPRAGUE



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TRUE STORIES OF GREAT AMERICANS

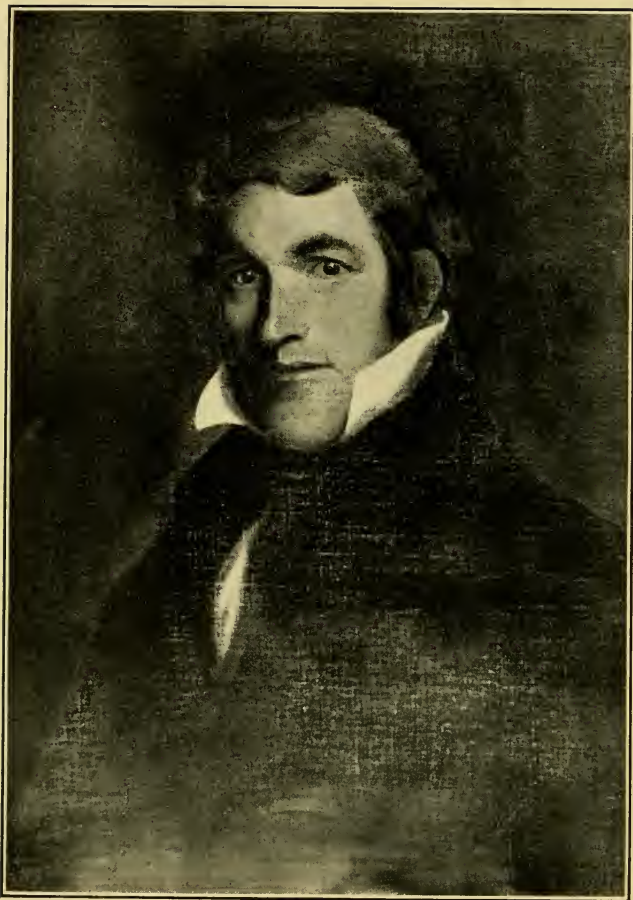
DAVY CROCKETT



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DAVY CROCKETT.

"It's the grit of a fellow that makes the man," — Davy Crockett.

DAVY CROCKETT

BY

WILLIAM C. SPRAGUE

“Live on, grow old, thou glorious Alamo!
Grow old in age, for thou canst never grow
Too old for fame; its wreaths will cling to thee,
Thou New World's glorious Thermopylæ.”

The Siege of the Alamo,

JAMES D. LYNCH.

New York

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PREFACE

FORTUNATELY, when I was completing the story of Davy Crockett, I made the acquaintance of Mr. A. W. Crockett, of Texas, a grandson of our hero. At my request, he read the proof of what I have written and, with one or two minor criticisms, gave it his approval.

He deprecates the story so often published that up to the time his grandfather became a justice of the peace he could neither read nor write; and, as a refutation of the statement, he refers to a legal document, now in the Alamo, written by him when he was holding the office of justice in Tennessee. At the unveiling of the monument to Davy's widow, one of the speakers, referring to this paper, said he defied a majority of the judges and lawyers of the country to-day to write as good a hand.

He also expressed his disapproval of the published statements to the effect that Davy's language was uncouth and slangy, and referred to the expressed opinions of some of the older writ-

ers to the effect that these statements are greatly exaggerated.

Perhaps Crockett's published autobiography may be largely to blame for the popular notion of his style of talk, for its pages give hundreds of examples of the faults referred to.

W. C. S.

CHICAGO,
September 1, 1915.

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DAVY CROCKETT

CHAPTER I

DAVY'S CHILDHOOD

WHEN a fifth son was born to John Crockett and his wife Rebecca, in their rough little log shanty, on the banks of the Nolachucky River in East Tennessee, they called him David. But whatever name was given him on August 17, 1786, the day of his birth, the world has always called him "Davy Crockett."

It was not a very promising world into which Davy Crockett was born. If he could have looked forward to the years of poverty, toil, and danger he had before him, he might well have been discouraged at the very outset. In that desolate wilderness home among the mountains, the rude speech and actions of the men and women about him were scarcely less rough and less alarming than the cry of the wild beasts in the surrounding forests, or the fury of the storms as they swept down from the mountains.

But from what we know of Davy as a boy and as a man, we can almost believe that even if he could have foreseen the future, he would have said on the day of his birth, "This is what I like. This is my kind of a world. Let me stay!"

Davy Crockett had in his veins the blood of fighting ancestors. His grandfather was an Irishman, and probably one of those whose fighting spirit would not permit them to remain under the rule of old-world tyranny, for he left his native land and sailed away to make a home in America, the land of promise.

No one knows just where these Irish immigrants first made their home. It was somewhere in Pennsylvania, east of the mountains, and probably in a "slab" shanty in the wilderness, for the government was generous to settlers, giving to any one who built a shanty and raised a crop a piece of land of four hundred acres. With strong arms to cut down the abundant timber, and with rich, virgin soil hungry for the seed, it was a matter of only a few months' time to make a home, unless, indeed, the Indians, the wild beasts, or the fever did not prove more than a match for the sturdy pioneer.

But the newcomers did not stay long in their first home. Like thousands of other adventurous

spirits in the new land, they ever looked to the setting sun, lured on by the promise of better things beyond; so, packing their few belongings on a horse or in a rude vehicle, the father, mother, and children made their hazardous way on foot across the Alleghanies, living on wild fruits and nuts plucked by the way, on deer and wild turkey shot in the forests, or on fish taken from the streams, ever on the alert for the wild beasts and the Indians who looked with ill favor on these newcomers in the land.

Reaching a fertile valley in what is now Hawkins County, Tennessee, the elder Crockett and his sons built for themselves another shanty of logs with an earthen floor, a hole in the roof for a chimney, and rifle holes in the plaster between the logs, in case of attack.

And the attack came; for one night the hideous yell of the Indian was heard, and when the savages finished their dreadful work, Davy's grandfather and grandmother were dead, one of their sons, wounded in the arm, had escaped into the forest, and another, who was deaf and dumb, had been taken captive and carried away by the redskins to be afterwards adopted by them and only rescued after eighteen long years.

What became of the other members of the family

is not known, save that John Crockett, Davy's father, then but a child, escaped. Some have thought he must have been absent from home at the time, possibly working as a hired boy at the home of some other settler, for boys were put to work in those days when very young.

We know little of the early life of Davy's father. He doubtless grew up as a day laborer, working at a shilling a day and his "keep," chopping down trees, hauling logs, planting corn, and tending stock. When the war of the Revolution broke out, he enlisted and fought in the battle of King's Mountain. At the close of the war he settled in the wilderness region of North Carolina in what is now Lincoln County.

Of Davy's mother we know less. Her name before her marriage was Rebecca Hawkins. Doubtless she also was of hardy stock. Neither husband nor wife could read or write, and they knew nothing of the ways of civilized life. All they knew was danger and privation; and their days and nights were spent in battling against these. Davy says of his father, "He was poor, and I hope honest."

As with Davy's grandparents so with his parents; they soon caught the western fever. We find them, in 1783, with three or four children — this was before Davy was born — making their perilous

way across the mountains into Eastern Tennessee. Weary from the long journey, their eyes fell upon a pretty little river, the Nolachucky, near where a creek called Limestone flows into it. On its banks they built a rude cabin.

The exact location of this cabin is not known, but it was near the site of what is now the town of Rogersville in Hawkins County. It was here that, on August 17, 1786, Davy Crockett was born. He was the fifth of nine children of Rebecca Crockett, there being six sons, four older than Davy, and three daughters, all younger.

Up to the time he was twelve years old few incidents in Davy's life are known, but of these things we may be sure: that he never went to school, never heard a sermon, never read a book, and that all the education he received, if indeed he may be said to have received any, was that which was knocked into him by hard experience and by listening to the tales of chance visitors who, at long intervals, happened to spend a night in his father's cabin. He must have learned to plant corn by stabbing the earth with a sharp stick and dropping in the seed; to chop wood; to know the names and nature of the wild things of the forest and the river; to skin the game and prepare the hide for clothing; to use the flintlock rifle, though that

weapon was so heavy that none but a sturdy boy could shoulder it; and to go long errands over the trackless mountains to the homes of the "neighbors."

While other more favored boys were dreaming of becoming great statesmen, or lawyers, or soldiers, Davy Crockett knew so little of the world that he aspired only to be his own master and carry his own rifle.

There were no men about him to inspire him to goodness or greatness. His father and his older brothers were rough, ignorant, and uncouth men. There was little to arouse the ambitions or aspirations of a boy whose early years were spent in such rude surroundings.

In twelve years the family moved three times; first, to a place about fifty miles to the southeast, where they built another cabin and raised a crop; again, when Davy was eight years old, to the banks of the Nolachucky, about twenty-five miles below their first home, where Davy's father and another man built a mill; but the mountain stream, swelled by a big storm, overflowed its banks, swept away the mill, "shot, lock, and barrel," flooded the cabin, and drove the luckless family to the hills.

Then came the third move; this time to a spot

on the Holston River, where, near a log settlement on one of the few trails from Virginia into the West, John Crockett, with the help of his wife and four boys, built a large log house and opened it as a tavern. The trail or road ran from Abingdon to Knoxville, and as the tavern was built on a small scale, the principal guests were teamsters who traveled over the road.

Davy lived in the tavern till he was twelve years old, becoming well acquainted with hard work and hard times. The change from the backwoods cabin to the tavern on the trail was a big change in his life. He now came in contact with the great tide of western immigrants. Rough men sat about the log fire after supper and told the news from settlements along the seaboard, as well as marvelous tales of war and conquest brought by the white-winged ships from across the sea. We can imagine little Davy, in some snug corner, wide-eyed and wondering, as he drank in the news from the great outside world.

As yet, however, Davy's chief companions were teamsters and rough, uncouth men with neither morals nor manners; as yet he had not learned his A B C's; as yet he could not write his name, nor "do" the simplest sum in arithmetic. But he was a crack shot, was quick to help the teamsters

hitch and unhitch, and was good-natured and popular.

Davy had a quick temper, we are told, and was not slow to resent an insult, but that was the way of people generally in those days. Something that happened in his first home, when he was five years old, illustrates this.

One day when playing with his four older brothers and another boy of about fifteen, on the banks of the Nolachucky River, a canoe ride was proposed. The boys jumped into a canoe moored close by, and pushed out into the stream — all but Davy, who, being the youngest, was left behind as being too young for such fun.

There were dangerous rapids in the river a little way downstream, and when the boat, with its crew of small boys, reached the middle of the current, it became unmanageable, and began a swift descent to the place where, as Davy says, the river “went slap-right straight down.” The Crockett boys could have managed the paddle, for they were used to it, but the other boy, who was the oldest and biggest in the company, wouldn’t give it up, but foolishly tried to manage it himself. He paddled and paddled, going every way but the right way, until they found themselves going, stern first, straight toward the falls. The cries of the boys

attracted the attention of a man who was planting corn in a near-by field, and, shedding his jacket and shirt as he ran, he leaped into the river. By the hardest kind of work he reached the boys when they were within twenty or thirty feet of the falls and just in time to save them. Davy confessed, in after life, that, young as he was, he was "too fighting mad" at the boys at the time to care what happened to them. It is quite possible that he did not realize their danger.

But Davy's general good nature and dogged industry during these days at the tavern attracted the attention of a Dutchman by the name of Jacob Siler who was driving a herd of cattle across the mountains to Rockville in Virginia. The drover made John Crockett an offer for the services of his twelve-year-old son as helper. It meant a tramp of four hundred miles across the mountains, and it meant days and weeks of hardship and danger. But John Crockett and his wife did not consider that. The money offer, small as it was, probably not more than twenty-five cents a day, meant much to the father who was always in debt; so Davy went with the Dutchman, though with a heavy heart, for rude and uncouth as his home was, he loved it. Doubtless he had made many a day's trip over the rough mountain trail, so he was aware

of the hardships before him. And he could not have magnified these hardships, for what could a little chap of twelve years know of the dangers that beset a long four-hundred-mile tramp over a wilderness trail, with the rocky steeps of mountains to be climbed, unbridged streams that must be forded, and dismal marshes to be traversed, as well as the consciousness that any clump of bushes might conceal highwaymen or Indians, and any overhanging cliff might hide a panther, a reptile, or a bear.

The Dutchman proved a good master and treated him well, so the journey was made without mishap. Furthermore, Davy won his employer's respect, so that after they reached their destination, which was about three miles from what is now known as the Natural Bridge, the drover gave him five or six dollars and told him he was pleased with his services. Also, he asked the boy to stay with him and not return to his father. The money the man had given him so pleased Davy that he accepted the offer.

In spite of this, soon came the longing for home, which, as the weeks ran on, ripened into a determination to escape from his employer. He did not know that a boy of his age could not make a contract that would bind him to stay away from his

father, but he had been punished so often for disobedience that he thought this man had the right to his services, and that if he left him at all, it would have to be by stealth.

One day there came along three wagons loaded with merchandise, driven by an elderly man and his two sons, bound for Knoxville, Tennessee. Davy knew them, for they had stopped at his father's tavern. Their route took them near Davy's home. Here was a chance! The boy told them his story, and, whether out of pity or because he needed the boy's help, the old man promised that, if Davy would join them the following morning at a point some seven miles farther along on the road, they would take him with them.

It was Sunday evening and the family were away from home. Davy set to work at once to make his preparations. Tying his few belongings and the few dollars he had saved in a bundle, he hid it under his bed and turned in, but not to sleep, for he was feverish with fear that his plans might be discovered. Between his childish love of home and his fear of his employer he felt, as he himself says, "mighty queer."

Four o'clock saw him up and dressed and creeping out into the moonless night. To his consternation, eight inches of snow had fallen during the

night and an icy gale was blowing. But what of that? Was he not going home? Was he not returning to those he cared the most for?

A short walk brought him to the main road, and this with no little difficulty he succeeded in following. Soon he found himself plowing along through snow knee-deep, and numb with the cold. His friends, who were up and preparing for the start when he arrived, gave him a hearty welcome and a good breakfast and together they set off for Tennessee.

The lumbering wagon, loaded with boxes and barrels, lurched along the rough trail too slowly for the anxious boy whose heart beat quicker with every mile that brought him nearer home; for home, poor though it was, seemed ten times dearer to him now than ever before; his parents were there and all the people and places that were dear to him. So he asked if he might not hurry on alone, for he could travel afoot twice as fast as he could go by wagon. Two or three hundred miles of wilderness road lay between him and home. Think of it, you boys of twelve! It was of such stuff that boys were made in the early years of our country's history. Permission was given him and he struck out alone. Alone!

Luckily, after several days, when nearing the

Roanoke River, which he knew he would have to wade, and that it would be freezing cold, he fell in with a drover returning to his home over the mountains, riding one horse and leading another. This was good fortune for both, as the man, who proved to be a jovial fellow, wanted a companion, and the boy sorely needed a lift. So they rode together until within fifteen miles of Davy's home, where the drover took another road and his young companion pushed on afoot. We can easily believe that he ran a good part of the way, for he was now in familiar country, and a few more miles would end the long and toilsome journey. The scene at his home-coming can only be imagined, for while his father and his mother appear to have bestowed little thought on Davy, they must have missed the good-natured, willing, and resolute little lad who had been gone from them for months. And there were his brothers and sisters, eager to hear the tales of adventure the boy would not fail to relate.

CHAPTER II

DAVY'S SCHOOL DAYS

THOUGH Davy was happy to be at home once more, he was now to be confronted by trouble of another kind — he was to go to school! Not the kind of school that boys attend to-day, but a rude log hut with a dirt floor, a hole in the roof to let out the smoke from the log fire, a square hole in the side to let in the light, rude benches without backs, and one long desk consisting of a plank laid on four posts driven into the ground. The schoolmaster knew little more than the merest elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic; but it was all the education possible to give the young people, and it was high time our twelve-year-old boy was getting a little of it.

But, alas and alack, Davy's schooling lasted just four days! Every school had its bully in those days, and there was one in Davy's school. Now Davy Crockett was not the boy to submit to bullying, so after the fourth day of school he hid in the bushes by the road along which the bully was to

go, and just as the fellow came opposite him Davy jumped out, and with tooth and nail went at him ! The fight was short but decisive, for Davy at this time had muscles like iron, and a temper fierce and unbridled. The bully was soon crying for quarter in good earnest. But victor though Davy was, there had to come a reckoning, and he knew it. There was his father and there was the school-master, either or both of whom would probably punish him ; so he played truant the next day and for several days. He would go with his brothers when they started for school, would hide in the woods all day, and return with them in the evening. But this could not last long. The teacher wrote a note to the father asking why Davy was not attending school. When the note reached him, John Crockett was in no mood to wait for the boy's side of the story. Cutting a big hickory stick, he started for the culprit, prepared to give him a sound thrashing. Davy saw him coming and took to his heels, the father following. The chase kept up for a mile when the youngster escaped over the brow of a hill and hid in the bushes. The father returned home puffing and blowing and in no amiable mood.

Now the truant boy was surely in a dilemma. To go to school was to be whipped, and to go home

was to get, as he said, an "eternal sight" worse whipping, so he decided to do neither, but to push on several miles to the home of a neighbor whom he knew, and there try to get work. Here he found a man, Jesse Cheek, who was taking cattle to Front Royal, Virginia, a point two hundred miles farther than he had gone on his trip the year before. He was not long in convincing this man that he knew how to drive cattle and knew the trail, so he was hired. A few days later one of his older brothers hired himself out for the same trip. People did not waste much sentiment over one another in those hard days, and probably Davy went away without so much as a regret.

The trip was doubtless much like his former one, except that it consumed more time and took him through such prosperous settlements as Abingdon, Lynchburgh, Charlottesville, and Front Royal.

At the last-named place Davy got his few dollars of pay and started back toward home. The whipping was growing dimmer and dimmer in his memory and the old desire to see his people was coming back. A brother of the drover was returning on horseback and Davy decided to go with him, hoping and expecting to take turns with the man in riding the one horse. In this he was doomed to disappointment, for the man did all the riding.

After trudging along on foot for three days he told the man to go on ahead ; that he would follow when he got ready. Davy was now three or four hundred miles from home and he had but four dollars in his pocket.

At this juncture he met a man by the name of Adam Myers, who was going into Northern Virginia and was intending to return to Tennessee. Myers was a jolly fellow and Davy liked him. The result was that the boy for two days accompanied him over the way he had come when he met his brother who was on his way home. The brother pleaded with Davy to go home with him, and so earnestly did he plead that the boy was moved to tears, and yet he refused ; for, as he said, the promised whipping came right "slap down" on every thought of home.

When they arrived at Gerardstown, the wagoner left him and he hired out at twenty-five cents a day to a farmer. By saving his earnings Davy accumulated enough to buy a good suit of clothes and still have seven dollars left.

Then came the desire to see the big town of Baltimore where the great ships came in from all over the world. The opportunity arose in the shape of the wagoner who had been his companion a short time before ; he was hauling a load of flour to the

Baltimore market and was glad to have Davy's help on the way. So, stowing his better suit in the wagon, and giving his money into the keeping of his employer, Davy entered upon his work.

The trip would have been uneventful had it not been that one day, on nearing a large town, Davy jumped in the wagon to change his clothes, when the horses took fright at some men trundling wheelbarrows, and ran down a steep hill, as much frightened as if they had seen a ghost. They turned a corner suddenly, broke the wagon tongue and whiffletrees, and sent the flour barrels helter-skelter in every direction.

Were it not for well-nigh a miracle this story would end right here, but luckily for Davy and for the world the boy escaped uninjured. Davy said this proved that "if a fellow is born to be hung, he will never be drowned"; and further, that "if he is born for a seat in Congress, even flour barrels can't make a mash of him."

At Baltimore the young backwoodsman got his first glimpse of the sea, and it fascinated him. Hours he spent on the great wharves watching the docking, the loading and unloading, of the great ships, and following them wonderingly with his eyes as they swung away on their voyages to distant lands. Little wonder that when the captain

of one of the big ships saw him, a bronzed, muscular lad, showing so deep an interest in what he saw, he offered him a place as cabin boy on his ship which was soon to sail with a cargo to London. Davy accepted with alacrity and hurried away to get his money and his belongings, which were still in the possession of the wagoner. But to his chagrin, the wagoner not only refused to give him what was his, but watched him closely to see that he did not get to the ship and escape him.

Davy was now a little more than thirteen years of age; he still could neither read nor write, and his total possessions were a suit of clothes for rough work, a better one for "occasions," and seven dollars in money. Moreover, he was hundreds of miles from home, among strangers in a strange city, with no friend except his employer; and now this friend had played him a mean trick. It is not strange that homesickness again gripped him and that he left the wagoner, without a cent in his pocket, and started again for his home in the Tennessee mountains. But two long years were to elapse before he reached there.

After trudging along the road for the first few miles of his long journey, Davy met another wagoner. The boy's heart was full. He had been robbed by his employer, threatened with a wagon

whip, and prevented from going to sea on the great ship; he was penniless, hungry, and tired, with hundreds of dreary miles ahead of him. On meeting this man and telling him his doleful story he burst into tears. Davy's new friend was angry at once at such treatment of a thirteen-year-old boy and he demanded that Davy go back with him and point out the rascal who had mistreated him.

When they came up to him, Davy's friend demanded the seven dollars that belonged to the boy. The man answered by declaring that he did not have that much money in the world, and that he had spent all he had, but would pay it back when he returned to Tennessee. The dishonest fellow pleaded so hard that Davy and his champion felt sorry for him and let him go without the threatened punishment.

For several days the two traveled together and then they separated, the wagoner going to his home in Pennsylvania, and Davy continuing on his way west. The last night they were together they slept at a place where there were a number of teamsters, and Davy's friend told them the boy's story. A collection was taken up at once, and when Davy started out alone the next day, he had three dollars in his pocket, which lasted him until he reached Montgomery Court House. Here for a time he

worked for a man who gave him a shilling a day, and afterwards for a hatter with whom he remained eighteen months. At the end of that time the hatter failed and, as Davy had not collected a dollar of his wages, his work for the eighteen months went for nothing. After a few months' work for another man he again set out for home.

On his homeward journey he reached the banks of the New River. The wind had roughened its surface and white caps were flying, making it dangerous to cross. He tried to get some one to take him over, but no one would make the venture. Then he asked for a canoe and said he would go over alone. People tried to persuade him that it was foolhardy, but he had already adopted as his motto "Go ahead," and, tying his clothes to the canoe rope to keep them safe, he pushed off into the angry current. Then began a life-and-death struggle to keep the bow pointed into the wind. Blinded by the spray, drenched to the skin, but clinging to his paddle, he finally brought the craft, half full of water, in safety to land, but not without having been driven two miles out of his course. Such was the indomitable courage of our fifteen-year-old lad.

Finally, late one night he came within sight of home. The teamsters had stabled and fed their

horses and were going in to supper. He inquired if he might stay all night and was given permission. Stealing into the house, he remained there unnoticed, and when supper was announced, which was probably done by striking a horseshoe with a piece of iron, he took a place at the table, wondering if, among the strangers there, he would be recognized, and hoping he might not be until he could meet his father and mother alone. But it was not to be so, for one of his sisters (and a sister's eyes are keen) recognized the long-lost Davy whom the family had well-nigh given up ever seeing again, and rushing to him, threw her arms about his neck, crying, "Here is my long-lost brother!" Sure enough! Two years older, but there was still the same ruddy face and good-natured eye. All thoughts of the whipping were forgotten in the joy of the reunion, and we may well believe the young prodigal when he says it made him sorry he hadn't submitted to a hundred whippings rather than cause so much affliction as all had suffered on his account, for they had not heard a word from him in two years.

John Crockett was now poorer than ever. His bad habits still clung to him and his debts had increased, until, disheartened and discouraged, he had given up even trying to pay. To one neighbor he owed thirty-six dollars. This neighbor was

a disagreeable fellow who kept a place frequented by hard characters. John Crockett was still entitled to his son's services, and when this man proposed to hire Davy for six months, and for his pay give back to Davy's father the note for thirty-six dollars that he owed him, John Crockett agreed. And so, for six months, the boy served a disagreeable master in a disreputable place. But he it said to the boy's credit, and as typical of his character, that at the end of the six months he refused to work longer for the man at any price, as he knew that to work in such a place would give him a bad name.

Davy's father had agreed that, if Davy would work out this thirty-six-dollar note, the boy should have his freedom, so that anything he earned thereafter should be his own. Now comes an incident that gives further insight into the boy's character. He was free now to sell his time and his labor for his own benefit. Soon after, he found work with a Quaker at two shillings a day. The Quaker took Davy for a week on trial, and was so pleased with his work that he gave him steady employment. After he had worked some time his employer showed him a note his father had given him for forty dollars, and proposed that Davy should work six months for the note. Many a boy, remember-

ing all he had gone through, and recalling that he was now free, would have said, "No; you agreed to give me money, and money I must have." Not so with Davy Crockett. His father's honor was at stake, and it seemed that he cared more for his father's honor than his father himself did. Davy said he thought it was his duty as a child to help his father and ease his lot as much as he could; so he worked the six months, never stopping even for a visit home, until, having earned the note, he borrowed one of his employer's horses and rode home. That evening he drew the note from his pocket and showed it to John Crockett.

"I can't pay it," the old man wailed. "Times are hard and money is scarce. Take it back and tell him I can't pay it!"

"But you don't need to pay it. It's paid already," cried Davy, proudly. "Take it. It's yours! I worked to pay it off."

History records that John Crockett shed real tears when the truth burst upon him that, although under no legal obligation to pay his father's debts, this son of his, for whom he had carried anger in his heart for a long time, and for whose proper bringing up he had done so little, had voluntarily paid his debt for him.

CHAPTER III

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Now follow two important episodes in Davy Crockett's life. Returning to his Quaker employer, he resolved to earn enough money to buy clothes; for during the twelve months past he had been working to pay off his father's notes and had earned no money with which to clothe himself decently.

After several months it dawned on him that, although he was a man in stature, if not in years, he could neither read nor write! The Quaker's son kept school a mile and a half away; and this, it seemed to him, was his chance, so he proposed to his employer that he be allowed to work two days a week for room and board and attend school the other four days. The Quaker consented, and for six months the awkward lad puzzled his brain over a first primer, and made rude scrawls with a quill, until he could read one-syllable words, scratch something that might be considered his name, and add, subtract, and multiply simple numbers; but division was too much for him. Not counting the un-

fortunate four days already recorded, this period of six months covers all the schooling David Crockett ever had, and all he ever tried to get.

Just before he began going to school, a pretty niece of the Quaker came from North Carolina for a visit with her uncle, and Davy proceeded at once to fall in love with her. When he thought of actually saying anything to the girl, his heart fluttered "like a duck in a puddle, and when he spoke, his heart would go right smack up in his throat and choke him like a cold potato." He finally mustered enough courage to tell her that if she wouldn't marry him, he would pine away and die with consumption! But the girl was kind as well as pretty. She told him gently that she was engaged to the Quaker's son, and then, as Davy says, he knew "his cake was dough."

But his broken heart was soon mended. A boy of seventeen quickly rebounds from a disappointment or a sorrow.

The next year he heard of two pretty sisters who lived some ten miles away, so he resolved to find balm for his heart with one of them. They proved good company, and he was not long in "making up" to the more attractive of the two. When the Quaker's son married his cousin, Davy and his sweetheart were asked to "stand up" with them.

This made Davy more eager than ever to be married.

Finally Davy proposed marriage and was accepted. He was now a healthy, muscular, awkward boy, with plenty of spirit and industry, but neither money nor home, and precious little chance of having either for some time to come. But love is blind, they say, and the day was set for the wedding. A few days before, dressed in the best he had, Davy set out from home, saying he was going for a deer-hunt. Instead, he went to a shooting-match. Now Davy had decided to take a hand in this shooting-match and win money enough to get married. He shot and was successful as usual, winning a whole beef. Selling his prize, he was enabled to go to his wedding, rich to the extent of five dollars.

Proceeding joyfully and proudly on his way, he came to the home of his sweetheart's uncle, where he stopped to pay his respects, thinking of course the girl's relatives would be proud and glad to entertain him. To his surprise, he found the family apparently embarrassed and not at all cordial in their welcome. Soon the secret was out. The girl's sister happened to be there, and when he asked her how the folks at home were, she looked mortified, burst into tears, and said her sister had

been fooling him and was to be married to another young man on the following day! Davy says it was like "a clap of thunder on a bright, sunshiny day."

After this second disappointment Davy had no peace of mind, day or night, for some weeks. He moped over his work and lost his appetite, until every one thought him sick. Disconsolate, he wandered for hours through the woods with his gun, scarcely knowing or caring where he went or what happened to him, until one day chance led him to a cabin where lived a Dutchman of his acquaintance who had a daughter, "homely as a mud fence," as he said, but smart and jolly. She at once began poking fun at him and slyly suggesting that there still were "just as good fish in the sea as ever were caught." Davy thought she was fishing for him, but she wasn't, for she at once began telling him of a reaping-bee soon to be held at a neighbor's, and promised that if he would come, she would show him one of the prettiest girls he had ever seen. Needless to say, when the time for the gathering arrived, Davy set out for the appointed place.

It appears that the girl and her mother had received some word of Davy's errand in advance, for, when the lad put in an appearance, a talkative old Irish woman hastened to address him with flattering phrases, praising his red cheeks and

telling him in unmistakable terms how glad she would be to have him as a son-in-law. Then the daughter appeared, and Davy was pleased with her from the first, for she was bright, laughing, and pretty. They sat and talked together in the free and easy way of the simple backwoods life; they danced the reel together, and played the rollicking games, every moment adding to the pleasure they took in each other's society, until, when the party broke up, Davy, who had already been addressed by the girl's mother as "son-in-law," went home walking on air.

The prospect of marriage again put ambition into Davy's breast. He lost no time in making a bargain with the Quaker to work six months for a second-rate horse; for, next to his rifle, a horse was of most value to the frontiersman.

After five or six weeks Davy decided to visit the Irish lassie and see if his first impressions of her were correct; so, mounting a horse, he rode the fifteen miles to her home. To his disappointment she was not there when he arrived. But he waited for her, and when the girl appeared, she was accompanied by another young fellow who was evidently paying court to her. The situation was a little awkward, but Davy determined to stand his ground. After a time, however, he made ready to

go. He was fifteen miles from home, and it was growing dark. Just as he was about to mount his horse, he caught a twinkle in the girl's eye which meant that she wanted him to stay, and by that token he knew he had won. That was Saturday night; and his visit lasted till Monday.

About two weeks after this, a very romantic incident added fuel to the flame. One day, when off on a wolf hunt, Davy lost his way, and near nightfall he espied a young girl "streaking it" through the woods at breakneck speed. He at once gave chase. Coming up to her, he saw to his amazement it was his sweetheart who herself had lost her way while hunting for her father's horses. Here was a dilemma; night coming on, no shelter, and neither of them with the least idea where they were.

At length, as night fell, they caught the glimmer of a light from a cabin door and lost no time making themselves known. They met a kindly welcome, for such was the hospitable way with these frontier people, who gladly gave them food and shelter.

Now Davy determined to have the date of the marriage fixed. First, however, he must pay for his horse, and, to shorten the time of service, he turned his rifle over to the Quaker.

Then, astride his own horse, he sought out the home of Polly Finlay, for that was the name of the little Irish girl, to induce her to set the day; but imagine his surprise to find, on his broaching the subject, that Polly's mother had changed her mind and was "as savage toward him as a meat ax." Whatever the reason may have been, she made a fierce attack on the young suitor, while the daughter and the meek father stood helplessly by. But somehow Davy gathered from Polly's looks, or from signs she made to him, that she was on his side, and that was enough for him; he didn't care for the rest of the family if he had Polly.

A few days later Davy was again before the door of the Irishman's cabin. This time he was not alone, for the whole neighborhood knew about the affair, and had gathered along the way to go with him to get his bride.

In the company were one of Davy's older brothers and his wife, and a younger brother and sister, showing at least that Davy's family approved, if Polly's mother didn't. Davy came on his own horse and led another one, probably borrowed from the kind Quaker. It had a blanket strapped on for a saddle, and a rude bridle of rope or strips of hide, decorated, probably, with green leaves and flowers.

As they approached, Mrs. Finlay stood in the doorway, arms akimbo and eyes aflame. She probably had expected to meet Davy alone on his calling for his bride-to-be, and was prepared to give him a warm reception; but what to do with the whole neighborhood about her, all in holiday mood, and all bent on seeing Davy win out, was something of a puzzle, even to her Irish wit.

Davy rode straight up to the door and without dismounting asked Polly if she was ready. She said she was, and, without any delay, she mounted the horse Davy was leading. It was a dramatic moment that followed. All expected to see the mother fly between them and make a scene. But she didn't. Her mother-heart weakened. Her only child, her pretty girl, was going away, perhaps never to come back! She had looked forward to giving her as fine a wedding as she could afford, and now she was going to a justice of the peace without her, and there would be no wedding feast, no dancing, and no merrymaking! She would never get over the sorrow and disgrace of it.

The old father went as far as the gate, as Davy and the girl were leaving, and begged them to come back and be married in his home. Davy refused point-blank unless the mother asked them to. It took but a moment for the father to gain her con-

sent and to signal to Davy to come back. Then every one rushed pell-mell into the little one-room cabin, refreshments were produced, the justice of the peace was summoned by a swift messenger, and the knot was tied as tight as it ever has been tied by a bishop in a great cathedral, to the music of a big organ and a white-robed choir.

Davy was now eighteen and his wife probably several years younger. Their entire capital stock with which to begin married life was a cheap horse and the clothes on their backs; and yet Davy said he felt rich. He was indeed rich in the true love of a pretty girl who could spin and weave and cook and do anything required of a frontier woman, which was nearly everything. And he possessed a resolute heart, a strong arm, a healthy body, a merry disposition, and a profound belief in himself.

The young couple had no home, no furniture, no ground, no money; and Davy had even parted with his gun to help pay for his horse. But it was not so bad as it now seems, for people's necessities in those days were few, and luxuries there were none. The woods and streams were teeming with game, the soil needed only to be tickled with a stick to grow corn, clothes were made from cloth woven at home, a cabin could be built and furniture could be made in a few days by the aid of a

knife and an ax, dishes were made of wood, with here and there some pewter pieces, while fuel lay all about. A horse and a cow, a good gun, a sharp ax, and good health were ample capital. Indeed, the settler's life was not far removed from that of the Indian, in the simplicity of its wants.

After a party given by Davy's parents at the tavern to celebrate the marriage, and a few days spent at Davy's home, the young couple rented a cheap cabin near Polly's old home; and with fifteen dollars loaned them by the friendly Quaker, they "furnished" it and began housekeeping. Here they lived for two years and here two sons were born to them. At the end of these two years Davy had not saved anything, though in addition to the horse he had two colts; and his wife's parents had given him two cows and two calves.

As with his parents and grandparents before him, Davy decided to go west. He had heard much of the fertile country beyond the Cumberland Mountains. He was making nothing where he was, and thought that by going into a new, unsettled country he might, in a short time, build a cabin and raise a crop, and thus become the independent owner of four hundred acres.

With Davy, to resolve was to do; so, bidding good-by to the home folks and the neighbors,

he started with his little family on a four-hundred-mile journey to the West. There were three grown people and two children in the party. Polly rode on one horse with the two babies, Davy was on foot, leading the two colts, on whose backs were strapped their few belongings; and, by their side, riding another horse, was Polly's father, who was going to see them safely through the wilderness and settled in their new home. It makes a picture that was familiar and common enough in those days, but seemingly impossible now. Think of the rough and uncertain trail of four hundred miles through a wilderness and over mountains! Think of the wild beasts and the Indians who at that time were becoming restless and threatening! Here and there a friendly cabin might offer shelter at night, but more often they must camp in the open beside the trail.

At length, footsore and weary, the little company reached a beautiful spot where they decided to end their long journey and build the new home. It was where a stream known as Mulberry Creek flowed into the Elk River, near the Alabama line, in what is now Lincoln County, Tennessee. Here Polly's father helped them cut the timber and build the cabin. This done, he went back alone to his home, at the end of the long trail through the forests.

David Crockett was of too restless a nature to stay long in one place, so in two years we find him moving again, — this time to a spot about forty miles east, in what is now Franklin County, Tennessee, and about ten miles from the present town of Winchester.

CHAPTER IV

SCOUTING IN THE CREEK WAR

WE must now turn for a time from home-making and farming, or rather from hunting and fishing (for David Crockett was more of a hunter than a farmer), to fighting and bloodshed.

In the year 1813 the Indians, and particularly the powerful and warlike Creeks, were giving the settlers of the South and the West great anxiety. Rumors were abroad of Indian raids on peaceful settlements; Tecumseh, the great Indian chief, had gone from the great lakes to Florida, inciting the Indians to rise against the palefaces who had come to take away their sacred hunting-grounds. Tecumseh was a wonderful orator, and the fire of his eloquence kindled trouble wherever he went. England and the United States were at war. The mother country had arrogantly claimed the right to search our vessels at sea and impress our seamen. She was now sending her emissaries into the country to bribe the Indians to go on the warpath against our people, many of whom, in their widely

scattered wilderness homes, were without the means of self-protection.

But despite oratory, bribes, and threats, many of the Indians remained friendly to the Americans, or at least neutral, and among them were the Cherokees. The Creeks were the first to go on the warpath, particularly that portion of them led by Red Eagle, or Weatherford, as he was also called. Red Eagle was an Indian of three-quarter white blood, the son of a Creek woman, herself the daughter of a Spanish father and Indian mother.

The Creeks (so called because the country they inhabited was full of small streams or creeks) when first known to the settlers inhabited a portion of Florida; later they moved up into Alabama and Mississippi, inhabiting the territory between the Ocmulgee and Talapoosa rivers. This region is known as the "Creek country." Those who remained in Florida were known as Seminoles or Wanderers. The Creeks had helped the British in the war of the Revolution and now they were again the enemies of the Americans.

The massacre of Fort Mimms, which occurred on August 30, 1813, opened the eyes of the American settlers to their danger. They saw that they must at once put an army into the field against the redskins, or see their homes laid in ashes and

their wives and children murdered or carried away captives.

Fort Mimms was in the southern part of Alabama. It had a small garrison numbering, perhaps, one hundred and fifty soldiers and a hundred women, children, and negro servants. Major Beasley was the commandant. The fort consisted of a stockade surrounding a few acres of ground in which were several blockhouses. There had been no serious trouble with the Indians for a long time, and the settlers had built homes in the surrounding country, feeling that in case of danger they could find safety in the fort. The gates were kept open, and a feeling of security prevailed.

One day a negro boy came running, wild-eyed and breathless, through the gates, shouting that when out looking for stray cattle, he had seen many Indians, smeared red with war paint, skulking through the woods. The garrison refused to believe him, and he nearly got a flogging for trying to frighten the people with so wild a story. Again, after two or three days, he came in from another tramp and reported with more excitement than ever that he had seen countless Indians moving on the fort. This time he actually was flogged for his untruthfulness!

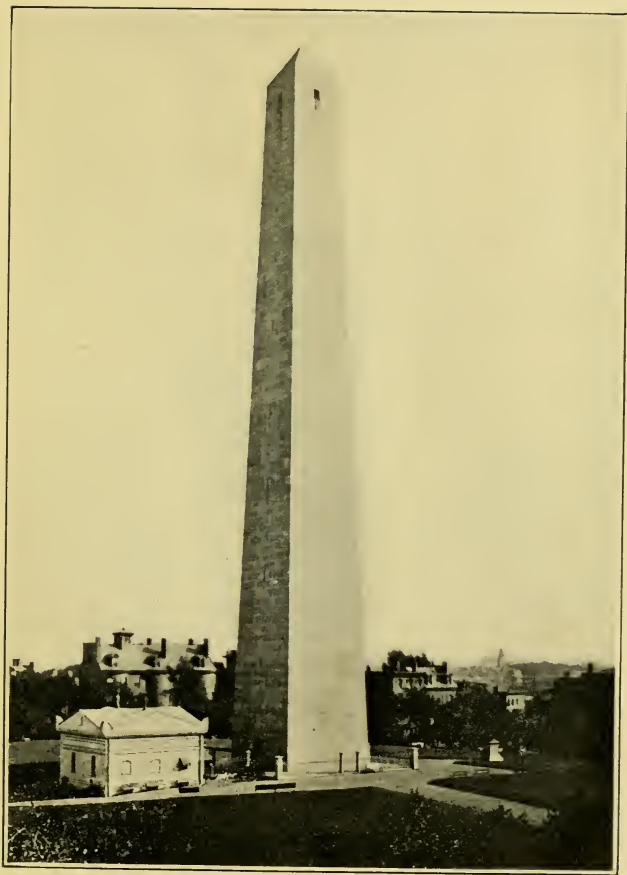
But even as the poor black boy writhed under

the lash, the Indians were before the stockade — fifteen hundred of them — with Red Eagle at their head. One historian says that their appearance was so sudden there was no time to close the gates; while another states that some of the Indians ran to the stockade with pointed sticks which they drove into the holes made to shoot from in case of attack; that other Indians set to work chopping an opening in the barricade; and that as fast as one lot was cut down by the fire of the besieged another ran up to take its place.

In a very short time an overwhelming force of yelling demons, hideous in war paint and brandishing tomahawks, poured in on the pitifully small band of defenders, who, taking refuge in or behind the few blockhouses, determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

After a desperate resistance, a few survivors, with the women and children, took refuge in one of these houses. But the Indians set fire to it and killed all who tried to leave it. Only seventeen of the garrison escaped massacre, while more than three hundred of the Indians paid for their victory with their lives.

The story of the massacre spread throughout the western country like wildfire. If this could happen in a peaceful settlement in Southern Ala-



BUNKER HILL MONUMENT.

"I went to Bunker Hill where they were erecting a monument to those who fell in that daybreak battle of our rising glory. . . . I resolved on that holy ground, as I had done elsewhere, to go for my country, always and everywhere." — Davy Crockett. (See page 136.)

bama, what was to prevent its happening at any point in the new and sparsely settled country stretching from the lakes to the gulf? This question was asked in every settler's cabin and by every camp fire, and its answer was a call to the men of the frontier to rise and punish the savages, and prevent their depredations before it was too late.

David Crockett, in his lonely cabin, heard the story of Fort Mimms. At once his fighting blood was up, and he determined to volunteer.

Mounting his horse, Crockett rode to Winchester, ten miles away, and after listening to a speech urging men to enlist for sixty days, he was the second or third man to offer his services. Then he returned to his home, bade his wife and little boys good-by, and, joining a company of sturdy fellows like himself, proceeded to Beaty's Spring. Here men were pouring in from all the surrounding country, — enough to make an army of thirteen hundred, as full of grit as any who ever mounted horses for war. When the little army was ready to start, their leader gave the chance to return home to any one who wanted it, but not one man of the thirteen hundred stepped from the ranks.

As soon as Red Eagle, or Weatherford, saw that two armies were preparing to take the field under General Andrew Jackson, he realized that in the

end the Indians must lose their fight. Jackson had sent word to the Indians that they must bring Red Eagle to him bound and a prisoner. No sooner was the command given than that powerful chief himself suddenly appeared before the general and made that remarkable speech which began, "I am Weatherford, the chief who commanded at the capture of Fort Mimms; I desire peace for my people, and have come to ask it." General Jackson was so taken aback by the bravery of the chieftain in thus walking voluntarily into his presence, where he could expect nothing but death, that he let him depart again to his people.

Opportunity came quickly for Crockett to distinguish himself. Major Gibson told Captain Jones of Davy's company that he wanted two of his best riflemen, who knew the woods, to accompany a small party across the Tennessee River on a reconnoitering expedition and learn what they could of the whereabouts and the plans of the Indians. Captain Jones at once suggested Davy Crockett. The Major, liking his looks and bearing, — for he was now twenty-seven, full-bearded, strong and healthy, with a clear eye and steady nerve, — told Davy to select the other scout. Crockett selected a young man by the name of George Russell. But when Crockett presented

Russell to the major, the latter was displeased and said he did not like the youthful appearance of the fellow; that he had not enough whiskers! Crockett was a little nettled at this. He thought that if courage was to be measured by the beard, a goat would be preferred to a man! He gave the major to understand that the young man was of the right stuff, and Russell was accepted.

The scouting party, consisting of thirteen, well mounted, started out the next morning and ere-long crossed the Tennessee River at Ditto's Landing. The next morning, after being joined by an Indian trader who offered to go along as a guide, the party divided into two parts. Major Gibson took command of one and Crockett the other. The two parties were to travel ahead by different trails and meet again at a point more than fifteen miles distant, where two roads joined.

On the way, Crockett's party met a half-breed who promised to join them at the rendezvous that night; and, as in traveling and in camp they had to keep themselves concealed as much as possible, it was agreed that when Jack, the half-breed, approached the place of meeting, he was to give the shrill "hoot, hoot" of an owl, which Crockett was to answer in the same way. One might think that the keen ears of Indians could distinguish between

the voice of a human being and that of an owl. The choice of this signal shows how closely the men of the frontier learned to imitate the wild life about them.

At nightfall Crockett and his companions reached the point agreed on, but Major Gibson's party had not arrived. Camp was made in an obscure hollow, a little way from the trail. About ten o'clock the hoot of the owl being heard and answered, Jack, the half-breed, joined them.

The next morning, Major Gibson not having yet come up, Crockett and his men rode on twenty miles farther to a Cherokee town, where they stopped at the cabin of a squaw-man whose wife was a Creek. This man gave them a friendly reception, but told them with fear and trembling that ten Creek Indians, in war paint, had just left his place and would shortly return; and that he was afraid if they found him entertaining white men, they all would be killed. Crockett laughed at his fears, and gave him to understand that he was looking for just that sort of Indians, and that he was not going back till he found them.

After dinner that day Crockett led his men eight miles farther to the camp of some friendly Creeks. Some of the men wanted to return home, but Davy shamed them out of the notion. On the

way they met two negroes who were riding good ponies and carrying rifles. One of these negroes Crockett sent back to Ditto's Landing, the other he took with him.

At the friendly Indian camp they found some forty Indians, men, women, and children. It was night, and they were having a good time about the camp fires. Some of the young Indians were practicing with the bow and arrow. Crockett and his men joined in the merrymaking, while the negro busied himself getting what news he could from the older Indians. He learned that a large body of warlike Indians were coming, and that they were afraid if the white men were found with them they would all be killed. Crockett told them if a hostile Indian appeared, he would take the fellow's skin home to make moccasins of! He and his men lay down to sleep that night with their hands on their rifles and their horses saddled ready for instant action.

Late in the night came a frightful yell which brought every one to his feet. An Indian runner had come in to report that the Creeks had been seen all day crossing the Coosa River near Ten Islands and were on the warpath, bent on giving battle to the American army under General Jackson.

At once the Indians took to their heels. Crockett

and his men hurriedly mounted their horses and flew back over the trail. Already they found the country filling up with "red sticks," as the hostile Creeks were called. The party covered sixty-five miles in less than twelve hours, and Davy made his report. The officers, much to his disgust, would not believe him; but as Major Gibson's party came in the next day bringing an even worse story, an urgent call for help was sent to Jackson at Fayetteville; at the same time the army was set to work throwing up breastworks. General Jackson was prompt to respond, and the following day his army came into camp almost exhausted from their forced march.

A little later General Jackson sent eighteen hundred volunteers, Crockett among them, under command of Colonel Coffee, on an expedition against some Indians who occupied a village called Black Warrior (now known as Tuscaloosa), about a hundred miles to the south. On the march they forded the Tennessee River at Melton's Bluff. The river here was two miles wide and shallow, but so rocky was the bottom that some of the horses were caught in the crevices of the rocks and perished, leaving their riders to finish the journey on foot.

When the soldiers reached Black Warrior, they

found it deserted. Through their spies the Indians had learned of the coming of the enemy and had fled, leaving their corn in the fields and in the bins, and great quantities of dried beans. These Indians had learned some of the ways of the white men. Their cabins were tastefully furnished, and they cultivated the fields round about. Colonel Coffee's men helped themselves to the corn and beans, burned the village, and proceeded to a point where they were to rejoin the main force.

CHAPTER V

FIGHTING THE INDIANS

AT this time the soldiers suffered much from lack of proper rations. Indeed, from the time General Jackson had come to their relief, bringing the number of men in camp up to nearly three thousand, the question of provisions had been a serious one.

On the return march Crockett asked permission to leave the ranks for a hunt. The permission was granted, though grudgingly. Such a venture meant great danger, since the hostiles were on every side of them. Scarcely was he gone an hour ere he returned carrying a fine deer across the neck of his horse.

He had not killed the deer himself, but had found it lying on the ground still warm, with an arrow piercing its vitals. An Indian had killed it and, when ready to carry it away, Crockett had appeared on the scene. A more cautious or less brave man than Davy would have fled from the spot, for at any moment an arrow might have sped

from behind a rock or tree and stretched him out beside the deer. Crockett knew the joy this prize would bring to his starving comrades, and though it went against the grain for him, as a true hunter, to carry away another's game, he dismounted, lifted it on to his horse, and bore it into camp. Crockett said he could have sold the deer for almost any price he might have asked, but that wasn't his way. "Whenever," he says, "I had anything, and saw a fellow-being suffering, I was more anxious to relieve him than to benefit myself. And this is one of the true secrets of my being a poor man to this day. But it is my way; and while it has often left me an empty purse, yet it has never left my heart empty of consolations which money couldn't buy, the consolation of having sometimes fed the hungry and covered the naked." He gave away all his deer except a small part for himself and his mess. To men living mainly on parched corn this meal must have been a feast indeed.

The next day, in hunting through a canebrake, he ran across a drove of fat hogs that belonged to friendly Cherokees; and these taking fright ran plump into the midst of the soldiers, who lost no time in securing fresh pork. A cow belonging to these same Indians came into possession of the

hungry soldiers. We may be glad that this seemingly cruel treatment of friendly redskins was partly atoned for by Colonel Coffee's giving them an order on the government for the value of the property; but no one knows whether the poor Indians received their money or not. Let us hope, for our nation's honor, that they did; for it should be the proud boast of our country that even the weakest of its people may find justice as sure and as abundant as the strongest.

After Colonel Coffee's command had joined the main body, General Jackson led his army to a place on the Coosa River known as Ten Islands, where he sought to establish a base of supplies. Here, learning of a gathering of Indians in a village some ten miles away, he sent a force under Colonel Coffee, who had now been promoted to the rank of general, to attack them. Crockett was one of the party. A portion of the American force consisted of friendly Cherokees who wore, as a mark to distinguish them from their hostile brothers, a white feather and a deer's tail fastened in the hair.

This battle, known as the battle of Tallush-natchee, was one of the bloodiest and cruelest of the Creek War. As the soldiers approached the camp, they divided into two parties, one pro-

ceeding to the right, the other to the left. Stealthily they crept along behind rocks and trees until the heads of the two lines met beyond the camp, making the circle of the invaders complete. Then a small detachment was sent in to show fight and draw the Indians out. The ruse was successful. With a yell the hostiles charged on the advance body which, after firing a volley, drew back. At once the main line rushed in, and the savages, overwhelmed by the numbers of their foes, retreated headlong to their huts, where from shelter they fought like demons for their lives. Finally, seeing themselves hemmed in on all sides, many tried to surrender. The squaws, some with their children, ran toward the invaders. Lifting their hands and crying, they dropped upon their knees, embracing the legs of the soldiers, and imploring that they and their people be saved from destruction.

At last the remnant of the warriors, nearly all of them wounded, together with their women and children, took refuge in one small hut. The soldiers advanced upon it, firing as they ran. Suddenly a powerful squaw dropped to the floor in the doorway, fixed an arrow, and, putting her feet against the bow and drawing the bowstring with all her strength, sent the missile straight into

and nearly through the breast of a lieutenant. In an instant twenty bullets pierced her body. Then the soldiers, as savage as Indians ever were, shot at the helpless men and women huddled within the hut and, setting fire to it, burned it to the ground. Forty-six Indians — men, women, and children — perished within its walls.

Stories are told of the stoicism, the stolid bravery, of the Indians in this battle. Crockett says that he saw a young boy of about twelve years, wounded in the arm and thigh and unable to crawl, lying so close to the burning hut that the heat scorched his skin, yet he made no outcry nor asked for mercy.

Every Indian in this battle, one hundred and eighty-six in number, was either killed or made prisoner, while of the whites five were killed and forty wounded.

The detachment then returned to the main army at Fort Strothers, the name given the defenses at Ten Islands.

A little later an Indian runner suddenly appeared, travel-worn and in great distress, and begged at once to see the general. His story proved of great import, for within an hour the drums were beating and the men falling into line equipped for a forced march.

The Indian had come, with an urgent call for help, from Talladega, a small fort some thirty miles away, inhabited by about one hundred and fifty friendly Creeks. One historian says that the runner slipped away disguised as a hog. He told General Jackson that more than a thousand Creek warriors had laid siege to the fort and demanded that his people join them against the whites, adding that if they did not come out and fight with them, they would take their fort, ammunition, and provisions; that his people had asked three days in which to decide, and had sent him at once to their paleface brothers to ask them to come to their assistance.

One of the chief traits of General Jackson's character was his promptness. No sooner was the story told than two thousand men were on the way, eight hundred of them mounted. This left but a few men at Fort Strothers, but Jackson daily expected General White to arrive with reënforcements, ammunition, and provisions. The latter he greatly needed, for his men had been reduced almost to starvation and were complaining bitterly. It is related that one day one of the soldiers, angered at seeing Jackson chewing something, asked for a share of it. Jackson took from his pocket a few raw acorns and offered them. That soldier was no longer heard to complain.

On approaching Talladega, Jackson's men deployed to the right and left in order to surround the place. The enemy, informed of the army's approach by their spies, were hidden a few rods beyond the fort where the ground fell away to a little stream, and where under the banks, which were edged with thick bushes, they could see the whites approach without being themselves discovered. Before the army appeared they sent word to the Indians in the fort that the palefaces were coming with fine horses, guns, and blankets, and that if they would come out and help them win the fight, the plunder would be divided between them. The besieged Indians pretended to agree.

The soldiers came on cautiously, Major Russell and his company of scouts in the lead. Suddenly the friendly Creeks appeared in great numbers on the parapets of the fort, gesticulating and calling, "How-d'y-do, brother! How-d'y-do!"

Their strange actions meant nothing unfavorable to Russell and his men, who kept on advancing past the fort. Suddenly two Indians leaped from the barricades and, running to Russell's horse, seized its bridle and turned it about, at the same time quickly making it known that he and his men were riding into the very teeth of death. Their strange greeting had been intended as a warning,

and Russell had failed to understand it. At the same moment the Indians, painted scarlet, charged from cover, yelling like mad. The only escape for Russell's men was to leap from their horses and take refuge in the fort ; and this they did, while the animals went galloping back to the main body of the army, which was then moving up to the attack.

Quickly the hostiles were surrounded and then ensued a bloody encounter. Trying to escape by one way, the Indians came upon a solid wall of fire ; then turning, they tried another way only to meet another such wall ; so, driven hither and yon, they fell like leaves in a storm, until four hundred lay dead or wounded on the field, and another victory was put to the credit of Jackson. Fifteen soldiers were killed and eighty-five wounded. The friendly Indians of Talladega joined their rescuers and marched with them back to Fort Strothers.

On his return Jackson found that General White had failed him. This was a bitter disappointment to the volunteers. The sixty days for which they had joined the army had elapsed. They had seen hard and dangerous service. It was winter, and their clothes were little better than rags. Their horses were ill fed and feeble. The men had little to eat, and there was no prospect of improvement.

Murmurs filled the camp and rumors of defection, which soon became open revolt. Many demanded that they be allowed to return home, get a new outfit, and recover their strength, promising to return. But Jackson refused; there was work to do. The Indians were not yet subdued. They must remain and share the fate of the regulars.

The volunteers protested and finally took matters into their own hands. Jackson was not a man to be easily balked. Stationing his regulars in double file across the one bridge the rebels must cross if they attempted to return home, and planting his one cannon where it could command the approach, he announced that any attempt to leave would be met by hot shot.

The regulars themselves were secretly in sympathy with the malcontents, and as they took their positions some of them called to the disgruntled fellows who were getting ready to leave, "When you come, bring our knapsacks."

Soon came the crisis. The regulars cocked their rifles, while the cannoneer stood ready at the muzzle of his gun. General Jackson gave the dissatisfied men a few seconds in which to retire. But the volunteers came on, their guns clicking as they advanced, straight to the bridge, over it,

and away; and not a gun was fired! Crockett was one of those who, having served ninety days, when he had enlisted for only sixty, marched away from Fort Strothers that day, looking into the business end of a double line of rifles!

No blame can be attached to the men who left Jackson at Fort Strothers. They had done their duty as they had agreed. They had overstayed their time. They had asked only to return home for a time, many of them agreeing to reënlist when they had seen their families and secured fresh horses, clothing, and supplies.

CHAPTER VI

FRIENDLY AND HOSTILE INDIANS

DAVID CROCKETT enlisted again, this time for six months; and again he became one of Major Russell's scouts.

The next move of the army was made in January, 1814, when it pushed on to Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River. The army consisted now of one thousand whites and two hundred and fifty Cherokees and friendly Creeks. Arriving at its destination, it camped in a hollow square. That night the tired soldiers fell asleep around the camp fires, little dreaming that a band of hostiles lay in ambush, awaiting a favorable time of attack.

Two hours before daybreak a chorus of piercing yells brought the sleeping men to their feet. Sharp words of command rang through the camp. Some ran to pile brush upon the glowing embers of the camp fires, to put out the light that made them clear targets for the savages; others grasped their rifles and scurried for the trees and bushes, hoping to draw the Indians out of cover, but with no avail.

The wily savages saw the trick and kept themselves in the dark; only the flash of a gun here and there gave sign of their whereabouts. At daylight the Indians withdrew, carrying their dead and wounded with them. Four soldiers lay dead on the field.

A little later, when the army was crossing a wide creek, the Indians again caught it unawares. More than half of the men had crossed when the Indians gave battle to those who remained. As usual they shot from ambush. Every rock and tree seemed to be alive with them. Taking deliberate aim, they brought down their victims at nearly every shot.

The company of scouts, of which Crockett was one, with the aid of their one cannon, a six-pounder, rushed to the rescue; then the Indians fled, leaving one hundred and eighty-nine dead. Twenty of Jackson's men were killed, while seventy-five suffered from wounds. This fight is known as the battle of Enotochapco. Crockett says that at this time Jackson was nearer being "licked" than he was at any other, and that he himself was mighty glad when the fight was over.

The Indians of this part of the country having been taught some wholesome lessons, Jackson called for volunteers to march on Pensacola,

Florida, which was held by the Spanish and Indians. British ships manned with British soldiers were in the harbor, giving them aid and comfort. Crockett wanted a chance at the British, who were back of all the trouble with the Indians, and quickly volunteered to serve under old Major Russell.

Jackson's army had been gone several days when Major Russell and a hundred and thirty men started. The march lay across Alabama to the junction of the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers, near Fort Mimms, where the massacre that opened the Creek War had taken place.

On their arrival they found that Jackson's army had left their horses at this place, because of the scarcity of forage on the way, and had proceeded to Pensacola on foot. Major Russell's command did the same, and after a forced march of eighty miles in two days, carrying their guns, blankets, and provisions, they reached their destination; but too late, for Pensacola had surrendered.

The small Spanish garrison, aided by the British ships in the harbor, had offered a weak resistance to Jackson's three thousand men of iron. The town was quickly given up and the British sailed away.

There was nothing now for the army to do but

retrace its steps to where it had left its horses, and then march to other points threatened by the English and the Indians.

A portion of the command under Jackson marched to Mobile, where the British were expected ; while another portion under Major Russell, consisting of about eight hundred soldiers and two hundred Choctaws and Chickasaws, marched north into the interior of Alabama where scattering bands of Creeks were still on the warpath, despite their many defeats.

On the way north the army passed Fort Mimms. Here, to the delight of the soldiers, many cattle that had belonged to the people of the fort before the massacre were found running wild. It did not take the hungry soldiers long to add them to their scanty store of provisions. The night after the killing, the camp was the scene of a great feast which presently became a wild revel, as, on that same evening, a boat-load of provisions, including a great quantity of drinkables, had come up the river from Mobile.

The next day Major Russell, with sixteen soldiers, of whom Crockett was one, and all the Indians, crossed the Alabama and set out on a search for hostile Indians. After a march of a few hours, part of the time wading through icy water up to

their armpits, their two scouts, who had been sent on ahead, came rushing back with the report that an Indian camp was just ahead of them. Preparations for battle were quickly made. The Indians smeared themselves with their hideous war paint and insisted on Major Russell, if he was to lead them, doing the same. The plan was for the sixteen soldiers to begin the charge which was to take the Indians by surprise, and, in the confusion that would result, the friendly Indians were to rush in with their knives and tomahawks and finish the job.

But what was their chagrin when this band of nearly two hundred men, armed to the teeth and creeping stealthily through the woods, finally came in view of the "hostile camp"; for they found only two wigwams situated on a little island in the river, occupied by a peaceful Indian, his squaw, and several children.

While considering their next step, the report of a rifle and a single warwhoop drew their attention to another quarter. Every one, with musket primed and cocked, rushed in the direction of the sound, and in a moment came upon two Choctaws who were of their own number. The Indians told this story:—

While stealing through the woods, they suddenly

came upon two Creeks who were out looking for their horses. The Choctaws represented that they were running away from Jackson's army and were hungry. This made them all friends, and together the four kindled a fire and sat down for a powwow and a pipe. The Creeks said they lived on the island the party had just discovered, where the peaceful Indian and two women had been seen. After a time they separated, the two parties going in opposite directions. Suddenly one of the Choctaws turned, took deadly aim, and shot in the back the one of the two Creeks that carried a gun. The other Creek, having only a bow and arrow, fled, closely pursued by the two Choctaws. The race was a short one; the poor fellow dropped to the earth, brained by the butt ends of the muskets of his two treacherous pursuers. One of the savages struck so frenzied a blow that he broke the stock of his gun. Then, picking up the Creek's rifle, he fired it in the air and gave the warwhoop; it was this the soldiers had heard a few moments before. Then the Choctaws cut off the heads of their victims.

When the soldiers and Indians came upon the two dismembered bodies, they appear to have been crazed by the sight, for each dealt a blow at one of the heads with his war club. Then Davy

Crockett, to please the Indians or for some other unknown reason, grasped a club and struck a vicious blow at a dissevered head. The Indians were delighted and called our hero "Warrior! Warrior!" But there was no true bravery in this act of Davy Crockett's.

And now follows another incident not at all to the credit of Major Russell and his men. We have spoken of the two wigwams of peaceful Indians on the little island. The two hundred soldiers and Indians now turned their attention to these.

As night came on Russell's party lay concealed in the bushes that lined the river at a point opposite the island. Two friendly Creeks in the party went out on the bank of the stream and called out that they wanted a canoe sent over to them, as they wished to cross to the island. They were told by an Indian woman on the island that the canoe was already on the mainland, — that two of their men had used it that morning in crossing to look for their horses and the men had not returned. These were the two Indians treacherously killed. A little search revealed the hiding-place of the boat, which proved to be a large one. Loaded with forty picked Indian warriors, it was pushed out into the stream and headed for the little island. The unarmed Indian, seeing the number

of the visitors and suspecting foul play, ran into the woods. The two squaws and their ten children fell an easy prey. They, together with what plunder could be found, were carried into camp. No one knows the fate of the innocent captives, but Crockett himself tells us they were not killed. We can be glad at least for that.

Shortly after this Major Russell's command rejoined the main army, which under Colonel Blue was on the Scambia River at Miller's Landing. From here the army entered upon a hard march across the state of Alabama to the Chattahoochee River, taking with them twenty days' rations of flour and eight days' rations of beef. Before they had gone three quarters of the distance their provisions, which had been doled out very carefully on the way, were exhausted. The expedition had met more trouble than it expected. Almost the whole way proved to be through tangled forests, deep morasses, or trackless wildernesses, with many and treacherous streams to be forded. There was no game to be had on the way for twelve hundred men, and no forage for the horses.

Half starved, clothed only in rags, and despondent, the miserable company at the end of thirty-one days reached the banks of the Chattahoochee. Their scouts had told them that on its banks was

a large Indian village; so it was planned to attack this village at daybreak. Ravenous with hunger, soldiers and Indians alike looked forward to a speedy victory and a good meal of beans and corn from the captured camp.

As day broke the signal for battle was given. The Indians with a blood-curdling yell, and the whites with a shout of defiance, charged with a ferocity born of hunger and despair. But what was their dismay and disappointment to find not a soul in the village, and not so much as a crust to eat or a bone to pick!

After a gloomy consultation, the leaders decided to divide the army into two parties; one under Major Childs, to strike southwest in the hope of joining General Jackson who was returning from New Orleans; and the other, under Major Russell, to go north in an attempt to reach Fort Decatur on the Tallapoosa River. Crockett was one of those who followed Russell.

The Indians had now lost hope. Little danger from them was felt by the starving troops that in single file followed the Indian guides along the rough trails. Discipline was relaxed and men strayed at will from the path, searching for game. Crockett was easily the ablest hunter of them all; and when, about the camp fire at night, the

hunters threw into one pile the results of their shooting during the day, Davy's contribution was usually the biggest and the best.

On the army reaching the Coosa River, Crockett paddled across and on the farther bank came upon an Indian. The usual way, as we have seen, was to ask no questions of the Indians encountered, but to shoot them. This happened time and again on the march, with no effort being made to find out whether the Indians were friendly or hostile.

In this case Crockett acted with fairness. The Indian had a little corn. Crockett might have killed him and helped himself. Instead, he took his hat from his head and, holding out a silver dollar to the red man, offered it for a hatful of corn. The Indian had no use for the money and shook his head; then he grunted out:

"You got any powder? You got bullet? Me swap my corn for powder and bullet."

Gladly Crockett handed over ten charges of powder and ten bullets and received a hatful of corn. The Indian offered another hatful at the same price and Davy accepted. Taking off his hunting-shirt he made a bag of it, filled the bag with corn, and with his prize he paddled back to join his comrades. He said he would not have taken fifty dollars for that corn.

Tottering with weakness, the army straggled into Fort Decatur. It was a small fort, and all it could spare to twelve hundred famishing men was one meal.

Farther up the Coosa some fifty miles was Fort Williams. Perhaps here the half-starved troops might find provisions. But no; a ration of pork and one of flour was all that could be allowed to the hungry and disheartened men.

Forty miles on up the river was Fort Strothers, and the army pushed on laboriously. The horses and men were reduced to skeletons. Many of the former fell in their tracks, where they were left with their equipments, for the men lacked strength to carry the saddles, bridles, and blankets. On the way they passed Fort Talladega, where, as we know, the Indians met with a great defeat in December, 1813; and where, Crockett says, the old battle ground looked like a gourd patch, so many were the skulls that lay strewn about. Before reaching Fort Strothers the army came upon some East Tennessee troops bound for Mobile. Davy found his youngest brother and some of his old neighbors among them. They furnished him with enough provisions to last him and his horse till the army reached its journey's end, the following day.

Crockett, though he still had thirty days of

his time to serve before he could get a discharge, here asked for a leave of absence that he might visit his home and family, and the leave was granted. His return home brought great joy to the little family whom he found safe and well.

CHAPTER VII

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

Now for a time we are to turn away from scenes of war to those of peace. True, Crockett had yet a month to serve in the army, but when called to join it again to go on an expedition after Indians, which he had reason to believe would be fruitless, he decided to remain at home, and finding a young man who was willing to take his place for the month's pay, he hired him to go in his stead and settled down to the peaceful life of a farmer.

Indeed, the war was now practically over, for soon the British gave in and signed a treaty of peace with the United States, Jackson sealing it with a victory in the battle of Chalmette, or New Orleans, as it is usually called. The Indians, deserted by their allies across the seas and everywhere beaten, ceased their depredations. Red Eagle was invited by General Jackson to visit him at the Hermitage, his home near Nashville, Tennessee, and there the great chief remained as a guest for almost a year.

Peace had come, and with honor to the United States on land and sea, and to none more deservedly than to the regular and volunteer soldiers of the western wilderness.

Now that we have followed Davy Crockett to his thirty-first year, we may pause for a moment to consider what we have learned of his character and disposition.

We know that he was a mighty hunter, and that he loved to hunt. Indeed, he would have been a better farmer if he hadn't been so good a hunter. He knew no fear. He held himself as good as any man; and when he couldn't prove it, he had a way of concealing his defects that was very ingenious and very successful. He was a good soldier, an able scout. He was generous and open-handed, and many a soldier had reason to love him for an act of self-sacrifice in the days of hunger in the camp or on the march. He loved his family and his home; for, while he left them to fight the Indians, he believed it was for their best good, and he took every occasion that offered to return to them. Out of these elements was to come a man who, despite his ignorance and his inexperience, was to leave a name in his country's history that will live as long as America cherishes the memory of her heroic founders.

During these two years Davy Crockett was to experience the first real grief of his life. Polly, his wife, the mother of his three little children, sickened and died. She was only twenty-seven.

Being left alone with three little children would present many a hard problem to a man, even though he were rich and surrounded by friends; but to Davy Crockett, alone in a wilderness home, far from friends, relatives, and neighbors, it was serious indeed.

By good fortune he was able to induce his youngest brother and his wife to keep house for him. But kind and good as they were, Davy felt that his children needed a mother's care, so he set about finding another wife.

Not far away, on a little farm of her own, lived a widow with her two little children. Her husband had been killed in the Indian campaign. Davy was not long in persuading her to join her lot with his. The marriage proved a fortunate one, as the woman was capable and industrious, and cared tenderly for the five little ones that now lived under Davy's roof.

The country was now rapidly filling up. Great wagon trains, laden with household goods, were coming across the mountains, and immigrants were settling by thousands in the fertile prairies and

along the western streams. It is said that on one of the leading highways fifteen thousand wagons paid toll in 1817.

Crockett watched the coming of this army of settlers with some uneasiness. He had no desire for society, and this appears strange in view of his jolly, social nature. He preferred the solitude of the wilderness, where he could hunt and fish with plenty of "elbow room."

So, a few months after his second marriage, Crockett started with three companions on an exploring trip to Central Alabama, — whether to hunt or to find a new home we do not know. Probably he had both objects in view. Soon the party was reduced to three. One of the men stepped on a rattlesnake which lay concealed in the leaves. It stuck its fangs into his leg, and the poor fellow was left in a settler's cabin — to get well, we may hope.

One night, having left their horses to graze near by, the three men fell asleep around their camp fire. In the early morning they were awakened by an unusual tinkling of the bells of their horses. A hunter's ears are keen to detect an unusual sound. Crockett at once went to learn the cause, and found that the horses had taken French leave and started in the direction of home. He

immediately set off in pursuit. For a long time he could hear the bells, but as he proceeded the sound grew fainter and fainter, showing that he was losing in the race. All that day he followed the animals' trail through forest and swamp, and by night he estimated he had traveled nearly fifty miles — and the horses had not been overtaken!

Now a further misfortune befell him; he was taken sick; his head thumped, his brain reeled, and a violent nausea attacked him. He could go no farther; and, turning to retrace his steps, he found after a time that his legs refused to carry him; a moment later he fell to the ground and lay too sick to move. Then the thought came to him that he was going to die there in the wilderness, and that his fate would never be known.

Several Indians happened along, after a little time; and, instead of leaving him to die as they might have done, and thus come into possession of a good gun, knife, and ammunition, they were kind to him. They made signs to him to show that they thought he was going to die. Indeed, he himself thought so. One of the Indians knew of a settler's cabin a mile and a half away and he proposed taking the sick man there. This Indian carried Davy's gun, while poor Davy staggered along like a drunken man. The owner of the cabin was away from home,

but his good wife took Davy in and tenderly cared for him. The next day two of his neighbors, happening by, heard of his plight. They were riding horseback, and proposed to take turns carrying Davy till they got him back to where he had left his companions, but when they reached their destination, he was too sick to sit up, and was put to bed in the cabin of another settler who with his wife gave him good care. Here he lay at the point of death for several weeks.

But Crockett was not born thus to die. As soon as he began to mend he began thinking about how he could get away. Seeing a wagoner passing one day, he induced him to take him to within twenty miles of his home; the last twenty miles was accomplished on horseback, the wagoner allowing him to hire one of his horses. The joy of his wife and little ones on seeing him again was great indeed, for the two men who had started out with Davy had returned and reported that he was dead.

About this time the government purchased a large tract of rich land from the Chickasaw Indians. It lay in what is now Giles County, Tennessee, some eighty miles west of Crockett's home. Great stories were told of the richness of the soil and the abundance of game. The good hunting,

of course, appealed to Crockett, so shouldering his rifle he again left home to better his fortune.

When he reached a spot at the head of Shoal Creek, he took sick with fever and ague. Strangely enough, while he was compelled to remain there he became so well pleased with the place that he determined to make the spot his home, and when well enough to travel, he returned for his family. He bade farewell to the old place with little regret, for he had come to look upon it as a sickly country and too crowded for comfort.

Always in a new country the first to come in are men of adventurous nature, and, for the most part, of bad character, some of them criminals escaping from justice. It was these bad men that made the Indians distrust and even hate the whites. The new Chickasaw country was passing through this experience, and something had to be done to prevent lawlessness; so the decent settlers got together and selected certain of their number to act as magistrates and constables to keep order. There was no law for this. The people did it by common agreement. These magistrates usually knew nothing of law. They were chosen because of their sturdy common sense and their ability to make themselves respected and feared. Davy Crockett being that sort of a man, he became a magistrate.

This was the beginning of Crockett's career as a lawmaker, though he admits that at that time he "had never read a page in a law book" in his life.

There were no law books, no lawyers, no laws that any one in that wild community knew. If a man wouldn't pay a just debt, the magistrate told the constable to bring him in and, after a quick hearing, judgment was passed on him. If the culprit owed a debt that he would not pay, his gun, his horse, or even his cabin was taken from him and sold to pay the debt and the costs. If he was caught stealing, the magistrate generally ordered that he be flogged, or that his cabin be burned, or even that he be sent out of the country. To every offense Crockett fitted a punishment that, in his rude sense of justice, he thought right; and from what we know of him we may venture the opinion that he gave satisfaction to the people who put him in office — which is more than can be said of some of our latter-day judges.

After a while this part of the country was made part of Giles County, and Crockett was legally appointed a squire, or Justice of the Peace. Now he was in a curious dilemma. The law compelled him to keep a record of what he did. When he gave an order to the constable, it had to be in writing;

and Davy could do little more than write his name. Luckily, he had a constable who could do it for him, so he got along to the satisfaction of the good people of the community, until such time as by practice and perseverance he was able to keep his own records and make out his own warrants. There is hanging now on the walls of the Alamo a copy of a "return" made out by him while a justice in Giles County, which is well written. Crockett says, "My judgments were never appealed from; and if they had been, they would have stuck like wax, as I gave my decisions on the principles of common justice and honesty between man and man, and relied on natural-born sense, and not on law learning, to guide me; for I had never read a page in a law book in all my life."

Davy was becoming popular with the people about him. He was a just judge and full of ready wit. He had a great memory for anecdotes and could tell a funny story to the taste of his listeners. His language was crude and unpolished, but it came easy and never failed to produce the effect he wanted.

They were raising a regiment in that part of the state, and a well-to-do farmer by the name of Matthews wanted to be elected colonel. As

Crockett had been a soldier in the Creek War, and was now a squire, with influence and popularity, Matthews asked him to run for the office of major, thinking that by getting Squire Crockett on his ticket he would stand a better chance of being made colonel.

To win favor, Matthews invited everybody to a corn-husking and a frolic on his farm. Crockett and his family were among those who attended. During the day one of Crockett's friends told him that Mr. Matthews's son was also going to be a candidate for the office of major. This provoked the quick-tempered Davy, who immediately sought out Matthews and asked him about it.

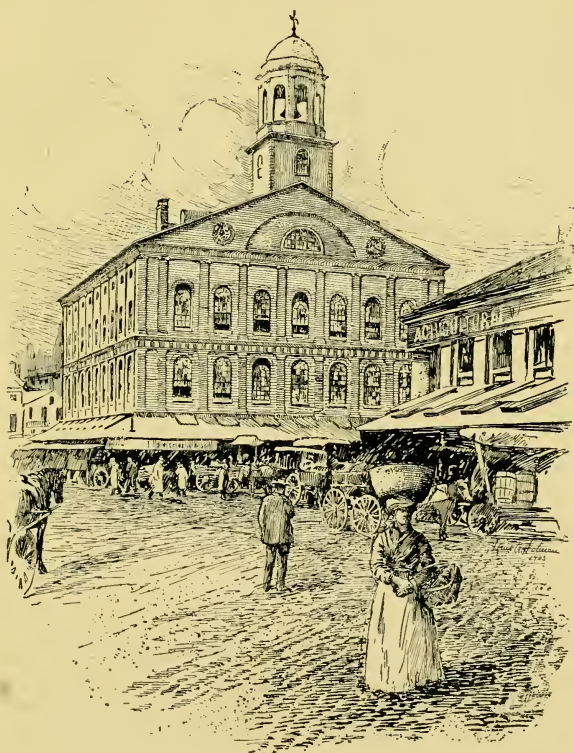
Matthews said that the report was true, and that his son was very sorry to run against such a man as Crockett. Davy at once saw the trick and told Matthews that his son need not be distressed, that he would not run against him, but he would run against his daddy for colonel!

After the husking was finished, and before the frolic began, Matthews mounted a stump and made a speech, telling the people he was a candidate for the colonelcy of the regiment, and asking their support. When he had finished, a queer thing happened. Squire Crockett took the stump and, in a speech brimful of good humor that kept every

one in a roar of laughter, he told the people he didn't propose to run for major, but would run for colonel against Matthews; and he told them why. Matthews had asked him to run for major, but since coming to the "bee" he had been told that that gentleman's son was going to run against him. In doing this, he said, Matthews had played a trick on him. He didn't therefore propose to run against the son; for if he had the whole family to run against, he would "levy on the head of the mess," and would run against the father, who, he declared, was totally unfit for the office.

In the election which followed Crockett won the title of colonel, while the Matthews, senior and junior, were both defeated.

Following this, in 1821, Crockett ran for a seat in the State Legislature to represent Lawrence and Hickman counties; but before he began his electioneering he took a drove of horses from Tennessee to North Carolina, which meant an absence of three months. When he started in on his election campaign, he felt, as he said, that it was "bran-fire new business" for him. He knew nothing about law or lawmaking. He had never paid any attention to politics. He had never read a newspaper. As for making a political speech, he could



FANEUIL HALL, "THE CRADLE OF LIBERTY."

"God grant that the liberty-tree bough on which this cradle rocks may never break." -- Davy Crockett. (See page 136.)

just as easily have talked Latin. But here is where his ready wit came in.

There was a big squirrel hunt to come off in the Duck River country. The entire company was to divide into two parties equal in number and hunt for two days. The pelts were then to be brought in, and a "tip-top country frolic" and barbecue was to be held at the expense of the side that brought in the smaller amount of game.

Crockett's side won, he himself having great luck. Then the feast was held and a demand was made for a speech from the candidate. Now Davy had never made a real speech in all his life, and he knew nothing about the questions of the day. His opponent, who was a good talker, was there and urged him to speak, thinking this a good way to show the people how little Davy knew.

So the backwoods scout and hunter, feeling, as he said, as if his mouth was "cramm'd full of mush," tried to talk. He told them they knew what he was there for, to get their votes, and that if they didn't watch mighty close, he'd get them, too! He confessed that he didn't know anything to tell them about government. Then he launched out into a lot of anecdotes that set every one laughing, after which he jumped to the ground, saying he was "as dry as a powder-horn" and started for the bar,

followed by the bigger part of the company; and there he kept them amused by his rough wit until his opponent had finished speaking to the few that remained to hear him.

A few days later came the opening of the county court at the county seat. This day, in country districts, especially in early times, was one of the great days of the year. Every one of any consequence in the county came to town dressed in his best; and if there was electioneering to be done, all the candidates were on hand to show themselves and make friends and votes.

On this occasion the candidates for governor, for member of congress, and for the state legislature were to be present. Davy knew he would have to speak, and in the presence of some real orators and statesmen. He says the thought made his knees mighty weak, and set his heart fluttering almost as bad as in his first love affair with the Quaker's niece. He listened attentively to what all the speakers said and learned a great deal, but what he himself should say when his turn came he didn't know. As luck would have it, the principal speakers took up almost all the time, and when it came Davy's turn, at the close of the day, every one was tired out with the speech-making and ready for a few of his side-splitting anecdotes.

When Davy finished, as he did in a very few minutes, he felt, as he said, he "was safe in those parts."

When the votes were counted, Crockett was elected, receiving twice as many votes as did his opponent, and nine votes over.

Colonel Polk, afterwards President of the United States, was elected to this same legislature. Crockett relates the following as happening when he first met Polk. Mr. Polk said to him, "'Well, Colonel, I suppose we shall have a radical change of the judiciary at the next session of the legislature!' 'Very likely, sir,' said I, and I put out quicker, for I was afraid some one would ask me what the judiciary was; and if I knowed, I wish I may be shot."

Colonel Crockett had just taken his seat in the legislature when a piece of bad fortune befell him. He had put three thousand dollars, more than he was really worth, into a grist-mill, a powder-mill, and a distillery, and news came from home that a flood had swept it "to smash."

Here is where his good, honest wife proved a blessing, for just when Crockett was feeling, to use his own words, that misfortune had made "a complete mash" of him, his wife bravely came to the rescue. "Just pay up, as long as you have a bit's worth in the world," she said, "and then everybody

will be satisfied and we will scuffle for more." Davy took her advice and determined to keep a good conscience with an empty purse, rather than to get a bad opinion of himself with a full one. He gave up all he had and took a new start.

CHAPTER VIII

PERILS OF A PIONEER

ONE would think that when a man was as popular in his section of the country as Crockett was at this time, he would not desire to pull up stakes and find a new home among strangers. But that is just what this eccentric man did. Hardly had he returned home after the session of the legislature when, with his eight-year-old son and a young man, Abram Henry, he started for the West to find a new home. They traveled nearly one hundred and fifty miles, through an almost pathless wilderness, to a point on one of the branches of the Obion River in the far western part of Tennessee, not far from where that river flows into the great Mississippi. Here, on a spot seven miles from his nearest neighbor, and fifteen miles from the next nearest, Crockett found "elbow room," and decided to build a cabin. It was a wild country, abounding in all kinds of game. This made a strong appeal to the man who was known as the greatest bear-hunter in Tennessee.

One day Crockett decided to visit his nearest neighbor, a Mr. Owens, who lived seven miles farther up the Obion; so, hobbling his horse to prevent its straying away, he started on the journey with his little son and young Henry.

Proceeding along the course of the river until nearly opposite Mr. Owens' cabin, he determined to cross the stream.

The river at its normal stage was only about forty feet wide, but there had been a freshet, and its waters now spread out over the country for nearly a mile. To cross the stream meant to wade or swim through ice-cold water of unknown depth. The bed of the stream itself was a swift and turbulent current.

[†] There is nothing to show that Crockett was compelled to make this journey, and prudence would have suggested that he return home and await a better season, particularly as to attempt a crossing was to expose to danger an eight-year-old boy; but Crockett appears to have courted danger. He loved to overcome difficulties. His motto was "Go ahead," so in he plunged. For nearly a half hour the three waded, Crockett going ahead with a pole to test the depth and so keep out of holes. At times it was so deep that the small boy had to swim. Reaching the submerged banks of the river,

they found a rapid, swirling current of unknown depth. On the other side a large tree had fallen into the stream, and its branches reached quite halfway across. Quickly Crockett solved the difficulty of his position. With his hatchet he cut down a large sapling in such a way that it fell across the stream, its top branches intermingling with those of the one that reached toward them from the other side. Supported by these trees, the three pulled their way across. But there was another half mile of wading through the icy water before they reached dry land. When they at last stood on terra firma, the little boy was shaking as if with the ague, and the father then, as he relates, "felt mighty sorry."

At Mr. Owens' cabin they found a warm welcome, and the little boy found a kind woman to dry his clothes and mother him.

A boat loaded with sugar, coffee, flour, and other supplies had come up the Obion from the Mississippi, bound for a landing about one hundred miles farther on. It was the first boat to go so far up the Obion. The boatmen had stopped for a little time at Mr. Owens' home and were now making ready to resume their journey.

The party was not long in becoming acquainted, and Crockett relates that, in the cabin of the boat,

they that night had a boisterous time which lasted till morning.

All the men of the party became fast friends, and Crockett agreed, in exchange for a supply of eatables and drinkables, to help take the boat the remainder of the way. The next morning the party started with the boat, but it was only a start, as they found the stream full of fallen trees that had been blown down by a great wind a short time before, and almost impassable. So they decided to wait till the water should rise and carry off the obstructions. In the meantime all went back with Crockett and helped him build his cabin.

Later, Crockett made the trip with the boatmen as agreed, enlivening the journey by several little hunting expeditions, — since the boat proceeded very slowly up the winding river, — bringing in several fine deer. The trip made, he returned to his cabin with a young man of the party by the name of Harris, who wanted to live with him. Then the four set to work clearing a little ground and planting corn, for it was late in the spring. While the crop grew the men and boys hunted. They killed ten grizzly bears that spring, besides innumerable deer, turkeys, partridges, and other small game, so the

little party fared bountifully; for they had meal for bread, besides sugar, wild fruits, nuts, and fish.

After an absence of four or five months, Crockett decided to bring his family to the new home, but on his return he found he was called to attend an extra session of the legislature. We may be pretty sure that "the member from the canebrakes," as he was called, fretted at being kept away, even for a few weeks, from the wild life of his wilderness home.

It was late in October when Crockett finally reached his new home on the Obion with his horses, his dogs, his few household goods, his wife, and their little ones. They all had *walked* the one hundred and fifty miles, single file, over the long trail, for at the time there was not a highway in all that region.

As Christmas drew near Crockett found his supply of powder growing small. He feared he would have none with which to "fire Christmas guns." In everything else he was rich. His bin was full of corn, and a day's hunt would supply juicy venison for weeks. Skins of bear and deer made warm clothing. Indeed, in all these things he was a "lord of creation."

But for a hunter to be without powder was to be

poor indeed. He had powder, a whole keg of it, brought to him by his brother-in-law who had moved west and built a cabin on the banks of one of the forks of the Obion, distant from his own cabin only six miles. But the keg of powder had not been delivered to him and he decided to go after it. The weather was bitterly cold, the channel of the Obion had overflowed until the waters covered the low lands, and of course there was no bridge across the stream itself, which was a raging flood. Yet the dauntless hunter, against the pleadings of his wife, determined to make the trip or die in the attempt. Tying up a little bundle of clothes that he could put on when he should reach dry land, he slung it upon his back, together with his hunting tools, and off he went. We will let Davy tell the story in his own words:—

“I didn’t before know how much anybody could suffer and not die. This, and some of my other experiments in water, learned me something about it, and I therefore relate them.

“The snow was about four inches deep when I started, and when I got to the water, which was only about a quarter of a mile off, it looked like an ocean. I put in, and waded on till I came to the channel, where I crossed that on a high log. I then took water again, having my gun and all my

hunting tools along, and waded till I came to a deep slough that was wider than the river itself. I had crossed it often on a log; but behold, when I got there, no log was to be seen. I know'd of an island in the slough, and a sapling stood on it close to the side of that log, which was now entirely under water. I knowed further, that the water was about eight or ten feet deep under the log, and I judged it to be about three feet deep over it. After studying a little what I should do, I determined to cut a forked sapling, which stood near me, so as to lodge it against the one that stood on the island, in which I succeeded very well. I then cut me a pole, and then crawled along on my sapling till I got to the one it was lodged against, which was about six feet above the water. I then felt about with my pole till I found the log, which was just about as deep under the water as I had judged. I then crawled back and got my gun, which I had left at the stump of the sapling I had cut, and again made my way to the place of lodgment, and then climbed down the other sapling so as to get on the log. I then felt my way along with my feet, in the water, about waist deep, but it was a mighty ticklish business. However, I got over, and by this time I had very little feeling in my feet and legs, as I had been all the time in the water, except

what time I was crossing the high log over the river, and climbing my lodged sapling.

“I went but a short distance before I came to another slough, over which there was a log, but it was floating on the water. I thought I could walk it, and so I mounted on it; but when I had got about the middle of the deep water, somehow or somehow else, it turned over, and in I went up to my head. I waded out of this deep water, and went ahead till I came to the high land, where I stopp’d to pull off my wet clothes, and put on the others, which I had held up with my gun, above the water, when I fell in. I got them on, but my flesh had no feeling in it, I was so cold. I tied up the wet ones, and hung them up in a bush. I now thought I would run, so as to warm myself a little, but I couldn’t raise a trot for some time; indeed, I couldn’t step more than half the length of my foot. After a while I got better, and went on five miles to the house of my brother-in-law, having not even smelt fire from the time I started. I got there late in the evening, and he was much astonished at seeing me at such a time. I stayed all night, and the next morning was most piercing cold, and so they persuaded me not to go home that day. I agreed, and turned out and killed him two deer; but the weather still got worse and colder, instead

of better. I staid that night, and in the morning they still insisted I couldn't get home. I knowed the water would be frozen over, but not hard enough to bear me, and so I agreed to stay that day. I went out hunting again, and pursued a big he-bear all day, but didn't kill him. The next morning was bitter cold, but I knowed my family was without meat, and I determined to get home to them, or die a-trying.

“I took my keg of powder, and all my hunting tools, and cut out. When I got to the water, it was a sheet of ice as far as I could see. I put on to it but hadn't got far before it broke through with me; and so I took out my tomahawk, and broke my way along before me for a considerable distance. At last I got to where the ice would bear me for a short distance, and I mounted on it, and went ahead; but it soon broke in again, and I had to wade on till I came to my floating log. I found it so tight this time, that I know'd it couldn't give me another fall, as it was frozen in with the ice. I crossed over it without much difficulty, and worked along till I got to my lodged sapling and my log under the water. The swiftness of the current prevented the water from freezing over it, and so I had to wade, just as I did when I crossed it before. When I got to my sapling, I left my gun, and

climbed out with my powder keg first, and then went back and got my gun. By this time I was nearly frozen to death, but I saw all along before me, where the ice had been fresh broke, and I thought it must be a bear straggling about in the water. I, therefore, fresh primed my gun, and cold as I was, I was determined to make war on him, if we met. But I followed the trail till it led me home, and I then found it had been made by my young man that lived with me, who had been sent by my distressed wife to see, if he could, what had become of me, for they all believed that I was dead. When I got home, I wasn't quite dead, but mighty nigh it; but I had my powder, and that was what I went for."

The next day Crockett killed the biggest bear he had ever seen up to that time. The day was bitterly cold. The rain of the night before had turned to sleet which, driven by a fierce wind, almost pierced the skin. But the household was out of meat, and this was deemed sufficient excuse for leaving the cozy warmth of the cabin for the biting gale.

Taking his three dogs, one of them an old hound of many hunts, his gun, and a good supply of ammunition, he set forth. For twelve miles he pushed through the storm without reward, save as two wild

turkeys fell before his unerring aim, when suddenly the wild barking of the dogs, now well in advance, told him they had sighted something worth while. Pushing ahead with all his strength, he soon came within sight of the dogs, who appeared to be barking at something up a tree, but on seeing him they plunged away again only to stop farther on and repeat the performance. This annoyed Crockett not a little, and his annoyance became a rage when, coming up again to where the dogs saw him, they again bounded away. Three or four times this happened. The hunter decided that the old hound was playing him a trick, and he vowed that as soon as he got in sight of him again he would shoot him.

Just then he reached the edge of a little clearing and the sight that met his eyes stirred every fiber of his being. There, just ahead, was the biggest black bear he had ever seen, engaged in a running fight with the faithful dogs who all along had seen the retreating monster, but with wonderful sagacity had hesitated to attack it until their master should be near enough to aid them in case of necessity.

Now, harassed by its enemies, the bear was hindered in its flight, so that the hunter could come up within rifle range; and to this end the

dogs, with almost human sagacity, had been working.

Finally, plunging into the forest, the closely pursued animal took refuge in the crotch of a tree, where he sat and calmly eyed his tormentors. Taking deliberate aim from a distance of eighty yards, Crockett sent a bullet straight into the monster's breast. Only the convulsive movement of a paw showed that the lead had struck. Again the rifle spoke, and almost at once the shaggy creature tumbled headlong to the ground among the three now frenzied dogs.

Davy did not dare to shoot again for fear of hitting one of his faithful animals. With his big hunting knife poised for the blow, he rushed in to finish the job; but the bear was still master, for, shaking himself loose from the dogs, he lunged forward to attack the hunter.

Davy was not desirous of trying a wrestling match with a six-hundred-pound bear, so, turning, he ran back for his rifle, which he had thrown down when he sprang forward to use his knife; then, taking quick aim, he sent a bullet direct into the beast's brain.

It has always been a matter of pride with the best of hunters to kill a bear. What, then, must have been Crockett's feelings as he stood, with his

panting, bruised, and bleeding dogs, above this, the biggest prize of his hunting career up to that time. He tells us that only once after that did he kill a larger bear, one that outweighed this one by seventeen pounds.

Crockett was twelve miles from home and the day was far spent. He could not carry so great a burden with him, and to leave it for the night was to furnish a feast for wolves; so he walked the long distance to his home, no doubt with a light heart and a buoyant step, despite the long tramp of the morning, blazing the trees as he went, so that he might find his way back again to his bear.

On reaching home he summoned his brother-in-law, who was living near, and young Harris, and with four pack horses returned at once to the scene of the killing. By the light of a big camp fire they butchered the bear, and, packing hide and meat on the horses, late in the night they made their way home.

By the following February Crockett had accumulated so many skins that he made a trip to Jackson, a settlement forty miles away, to dispose of them. His eldest son accompanied him. Here, after he had made his sale, and bought some coffee, sugar, salt, powder, and lead, he formed the acquaintance of three men who were rival candidates for the

legislature. In their talk together one of them jokingly proposed that Crockett also stand as a candidate. Crockett replied that this was out of the question, as he now lived forty miles away from any settlement and was a stranger in that part of the country.

One of the men who was talking with him was a certain Dr. Butler, a nephew of Andrew Jackson, who was then one of the most prominent public men in America.

One day, after Crockett's return home, a traveler stopped at his cabin door and told him he had been named as a candidate for the legislature, and, drawing forth a newspaper, showed Davy the big headlines that announced the fact. The newspaper article sounded to Davy as if some one was playing a joke on him. This so stirred his fighting blood that he hired a young man of the neighborhood to plant his crops, and then Davy started out to make somebody pay for his fun.

Two of the candidates referred to finally withdrew in favor of Dr. Butler. The doctor thought he would win easily on the strength of his connection with the great Jackson, as well as on his own merits, but when the votes were counted, Crockett came in ahead by two hundred and forty-seven votes.

This election plainly showed Crockett's popularity as a man, for he won it without the advantage of education, influence, or money.

At the end of Crockett's term in the legislature he was reëlected with little opposition.

At this time General Jackson became a candidate for the United States Senate from the state of Tennessee, and the legislature of the state elected him. There were twenty-five votes against him and one of the twenty-five was Crockett's. We wonder if Davy did not remember the day at Fort Strothers when General Jackson ordered the regulars to aim their rifles at the volunteers who, after overstaying the time for which they had enlisted, had decided to go home! By this vote Crockett showed that even the mighty name of Jackson did not frighten him.

CHAPTER IX

DAVY AS A BEAR HUNTER

So popular had Crockett become, largely because of his homely good humor, his skill as a hunter, his hard common sense, and his sterling honesty and independence, that he was urged to run for Congress. This was a little too much for "the member from the canebrakes." He knew little enough about Tennessee affairs, and nothing at all about national or "Congress matters," as he called them. But he allowed himself to be persuaded. His party was opposed to the new tariff law, passed in 1824, and it wanted a popular man to run against Colonel Alexander, who was up for reëlection and who was in favor of the tariff.

Unfortunately for Davy, the price of cotton just at that time went up to twenty-five dollars a hundred, and Colonel Alexander made the people believe it was on account of the tariff law which he had voted for. Crockett said, "The people know'd cotton had raised, sure enough, and if the colonel hadn't done it, they didn't know what had. I

might as well have sung psalms over a dead horse as to try to make the people believe otherwise." When the ballots were counted, Crockett lost by two votes.

Perhaps the country did not lose much by Davy's defeat, for he was not much of a statesman. He was honest and sincere, but his knowledge and experience were not in the line of politics and statecraft, and further than to make himself liked as an eccentric backwoodsman, with a fund of humorous anecdote and a record as a hunter, he could not have done a great deal at Washington.

During these years Crockett learned that there were some other things he could not do besides make a political speech, for he tried lumbering and failed at it, as we shall see.

About twenty-five miles from Crockett's cabin, on the banks of the river that here widened out into what he called a lake, grew a vast number of fine white-oak trees.

Thinking he could make money in the stave business, Crockett went over to the lake and, hiring some choppers, went to work cutting down the trees, sawing the trunks and large limbs into short logs, and splitting these into staves. These staves he planned to load upon rude flatboats, which his men were to construct, and take down the

Mississippi to New Orleans, where barrel-makers would buy them at a good price. This was in the fall of 1825.

While his men were thus engaged, Crockett spent much of his time roaming through the forests, often accompanied by his eldest son who had already become an expert hunter. The country proved to be full of bears, and Crockett could not resist the call to a bear hunt.

There were three months of the winter when he could not hunt, for in these three months the bears, having grown fat on fruits and nuts, crawl into hollow logs or trees, or into the dense canebrakes to sleep. Their winter naps last from about January first to the last of April. When they come out in the spring, they are ravenous. It is a bad time then to meet Sir Bruin.

Davy's stories of his exploits at this time are scarcely believable. For instance, he tells us that in one week he killed seventeen large bears; that during the fall and winter he brought down fifty-eight, and in one month of the following spring, forty-seven — a total of one hundred and five bears in eight or nine months!

At one time he and a friend, with eight trained dogs as fierce as panthers, killed a bear a day for fourteen successive days. Surely his reputation as

a bear hunter was well deserved. That it was not every hunter who could do so well is shown by the fact that the people about him, most of them skilled hunters, marveled at his prowess and held him to be the greatest of them all. Some of Crockett's adventures at this time must be related.

Just after Christmas, while working with his men cutting staves, he felt he could stand it no longer and must go for a hunt, since in a few days the bears, fattened for their winter sleep, would have disappeared. So, calling his dogs and shouldering his gun, he started out, taking his little son with him. The very first evening he killed three bears. Driving four forked sticks into the ground for supports, he constructed a platform several feet from the ground on which he placed the bear meat after salting it, so that it should be out of the reach of wolves. The next morning early some hunters came into camp with fourteen dogs "so thin and weak that when they barked they almost had to lean up against a tree and take a rest." Davy told the hunters to stay and let the dogs feed on the remains of the bears he had just cut up, and he and his boy pushed on. Soon his dogs stirred up a big bear that ran plump into the camp he had just left, where he was shot by the hunters who were still there. A little later, in going

through a canebrake, his dogs divided into two companies, and both were soon raising such a fuss that their master knew there were two fights under way. He at once set out for one, and his little son for the other. Davy found five of his dogs on top of a two-year-old bear, and he was not long in dispatching him with his knife. Just then the boy's rifle cracked and, hurrying in the direction from which the sound came, he found the boy with his two dogs standing over their dead bear. Still another dog now announced, by ferocious cries, that he had another prize, and when Crockett rushed up, he found this one dog alone had treed the largest bear of the three. It took but one shot of Crockett's rifle to bring him down, and thus in one half hour the father and son had killed three bears.

After butchering their prey, and while preparing a camp for the night, they heard again the cry of the dogs and at once started in pursuit, but after following for some time they turned and retraced their steps. On the way they met a miserable-looking fellow who was trying to find something to eat for his hungry family. He lived in a tumble-down cabin not far away. Davy at once suggested that if he would go with them and help salt and scaffold their meat, he would give him all the meat

he would need for a long time to come. The fellow had never seen a bear killed, and when Davy told him he had killed six within twenty-four hours, he was eager to accept the hunter's proposal.

Night had now come on and the dogs had not returned. Crockett says of them: "I afterwards found they had treed the bear about five miles off, near to a man's house, and had barked at it the whole enduring night. Poor fellows! Many a time they looked for me, and wondered why I didn't come, for they know'd there was no mistake in me, and I know'd they were as good as ever fluttered. In the morning, as soon as it was light enough to see, the man took his gun and went to them, and shot the bear and killed it. My dogs, however, wouldn't have anything to say to this stranger, so they left him, and came early in the morning back to me."

The next day four big fat fellows were killed, and before the week was out, the total number to their credit was seventeen. To the poor fellow he had picked up and invited to go with them, Crockett gave a thousand pounds of bear meat, enough to last his family a year.

Hardly had Crockett returned from this hunt before a neighbor who stood in need of meat invited him to go on another hunt. Davy could

not resist, though he felt it was too close to the time when the bears were wont to go into hiding, and he had men working for him in the woods, cutting staves and building boats.

The second day out on this hunt they killed a bear that had gone into winter quarters in a dense thicket of cane. The dogs had scented him, but they were afraid to go into the cane house the bear had made until their master had come up. With him back of them they would, as Davy says, "seize the old serpent himself with all his horns and heads and cloven foot and ugliness into the bargain." So when Crockett encouraged them, they plunged in and the next instant the bear was out among them. Crockett's friend was anxious to kill a bear and he gave him the chance. One shot laid him low.

The next day they hunted in a region where a hurricane had strewn the ground with fallen timber, making a fine place for bears. In riding along on a high ridge Crockett saw on the bark of a standing black-oak the claw marks of a bear. The character of the marks showed that the animal had climbed the tree and had not come down, as there were no long scratches on the bark, and these are always found after a bear has come down a tree.

Dismounting from their horses, the hunters pre-

pared to do a little reconnoitering, as they say in the army. Seeing a sapling at a short distance, Crockett started to chop it down with his tomahawk so as to make it fall against the one with the bear in it. This was to enable his little son to climb up, for he could climb like a squirrel, and look down into the hole where the bear had probably gone for his winter nap. But before the job was finished, a great barking of the dogs drew their attention in another direction.

Leaving the boy to chop down the tree, the two men went on, to find the dogs had treed a fat bear which at one shot came tumbling down like a log. Then in the distance came the cry of the same dog that in the previous story had alone treed one of the three bears killed in an afternoon; and, on following this up, they found he had another one treed. When this one was brought down, the two men returned to the tree in which the first bear had taken refuge, to find the boy had chopped down the sapling, but that it had not fallen as intended.

Crockett then retired to some distance with his dogs, so that the falling tree should not hit them, and waited. The others chopped at the tree containing the bear. It proved to be hollow. In a few moments Davy called to the others to look up, and, as they did so, the bear poked his head out of

the hole and looked down at them, and the next moment his bearship was clambering down the trunk! Crockett's friend fired, and the beast tumbled into the midst of the dogs. A rough-and-tumble fight ensued, during which they all rolled to the bottom of the ridge on which the tree had stood. Crockett followed, and, taking careful aim lest he injure a dog, he killed the animal, thus adding a third to the number for the day.

The following day Crockett left his companion, to follow the cries of his dogs. For three miles or more he pushed along, over and under fallen timber, through thickets of cane and tangled vines. His progress was slow, as the ground was rough and hilly, and frequently he had to go some distance to the right or left to get around cracks in the ground made by the great earthquake that visited this region in 1812. By the time he had come up with the dogs it was so dark he could see the bear they had been following only as a dark mass in the fork of a poplar tree.

There was no dry brush to set afire and make a light with, so he fired his rifle at a guess. The bear, instead of coming down, walked farther out on a limb, which gave Davy a better view of him. Even after a second shot the bear remained perfectly still, but while his persecutor was loading for

a third shot, the big fellow came scrambling down into the midst of the yelping dogs. Then occurred a fierce fight at the hunter's very feet, part of the time almost within his reach, as he stood with his big knife in hand, ready to defend himself if the creature attacked him. So dark was it that he could not distinguish bear from dogs. Finally the bear got down into a crack in the earth some four feet deep. Davy says he could only tell which was "the biting end of him" by the "hollering" of his dogs. Feeling about with the muzzle of his gun till he thought it was against a vital part of the animal, he fired, but the bullet struck only the fleshy part of a foreleg. This forced the bear out of his retreat and another stiff fight followed, ending, as before, in the bear taking refuge in the crack.

On feeling about for his gun, which he had laid down a moment before, the hunter's hand touched a long, heavy pole, and the thought occurred to him to try punching him out. But with all the punching, and the dogs jumping in on him, the creature remained where he was.

Now Crockett decided on a dangerous expedient. Sending his dogs at the animal's head, he crept into the hole and, feeling his way carefully till he touched the animal's rump, he made a fierce

thrust with his long knife just back of where he thought the shoulder should be and, as luck would have it, the knife pierced the heart.

But the story is not yet ended. The hunter had waded an icy creek in following his dogs. The excitement of the struggle with the bear had made him forget his discomfort. But now leggins and moccasins were stiff with ice and he was numb with cold. Nothing could be found dry enough to burn. He dared not lie down for fear he would go to sleep and freeze to death. He could not walk, as his legs were numb and it was pitch dark. He tried jumping about, rolling on the ground, shouting, and beating his body to restore circulation, but to little purpose. Within reach was a tall tree, about two feet in diameter and thirty feet to the first limb. Wrapping his arms and legs about it, he hunched himself up, slowly and painfully at first, until he reached the limb; and then, still hugging the trunk, he let himself slide down. This, to his joy, brought returning life. Repeating the performance again and again, he found it made him warm, so he kept it up at intervals all night and thus saved his life. Davy says he does not know how often he climbed that tree, but it seemed to him "like a hundred times."

The next day when they returned to get the

bear, and Davy's neighbor heard the story of the fight, and saw the crack in the ground and the marks of the struggle, he said he wouldn't have gone into that hole for all the bears in the woods. The party of three having now killed ten bears, which made as much meat as their five horses could carry, started for home, thirty miles away. The fall and winter's hunting was now over, with fifty-eight bears to Crockett's credit.

All this time Crockett's hired men were working on the Obion River, getting out staves and building two rude flatboats. His big business undertaking had been allowed to run itself while he was miles away in the forest shooting bears.

CHAPTER X

BOATMAN AND CONGRESSMAN

EARLY in the spring, with thirty thousand staves loaded in the two flatboats, Crockett and a small crew of woodsmen pushed out from shore and made their way into the current of the Mississippi. There does not appear to have been an experienced riverman among them, as Davy discovered as soon as they were afloat on the great stream. The man hired as pilot knew as little about the job as his employer did, and the result was a general scare, Crockett being perhaps the most scared man of the lot.

The boats were of the rudest construction, being mere flatboats of hewn timbers, with a deck over a small part, roofing a cabin where the crew were to eat and sleep. A heavy rudder at the stern, worked by hand or shoulder, was supposed to guide the craft.

As soon as the two heavily laden boats reached the main current of the Mississippi, they showed a tendency to take matters into their own hands,

so the crews lashed them together. This did not improve matters. The men were unable to control the clumsy craft, and, as helpless as toy boats above a Niagara, their huge hulks swung around, now side-wise, now at an angle with the current, but seldom bow on.

Crockett, frightened as he never had been on land, directed that the boats be headed to the shore, but after repeated attempts this had to be given up. The stream was full of snags and obstructions, shifting sandbars, little islands, and sharp turns, on any one of which at any moment they were liable to come to grief. They could not tie up for the night, for they could not stop, so there was no sleep and no respite from anxiety.

Crockett, with most of his clothes off, was sitting at night in the cabin, ruminating on his bad luck, and thinking how much better bear hunting was than floating on the water, when he heard the sound of hurried footsteps on the deck above him. Going to the hatchway, he was met by a flood of water, and at the same moment the boat lurched. He knew that the end had come, and for a moment he believed himself penned in like a mouse in a trap. Then he thought of a small hole in the boat's side which the crew used when dipping up water. It was hardly large

enough for a man's body, but it was his one way of escape and it was worth trying. Thrusting his head and arms through, he wriggled and squirmed to get out, but the more he struggled the tighter he became wedged. He could get hold of nothing to pull on or to push against. The water in the cabin was almost up to his neck. Calling to his men, they rushed to his aid. Clambering along the logs and driftwood under which the boat was being drawn by the current, they grasped him by the arms and shoulders and pulled with all their might. Davy commanded them to pull his arms off if necessary, as "it was get out or sink."

When at last he was rescued, he was found to be skinned "like a rabbit," without a stitch to his back. The entire party, which had barely escaped with their lives, sat, during the remainder of the night, on the raft of driftwood against which they had come to grief. Four of the company were bareheaded and three barefooted. Every particle of their clothing was lost excepting what they happened to have on, which in Davy's case was little. The next day, hailing a passing boat, they were taken on board and landed at Memphis. Here Crockett met one of his comrades in the Creek War who supplied him with clothing and money, of which he and his men stood sadly in

need. This friend refused to take Crockett's note for the loan, and depended solely on his verbal promise to pay back the money. We may be quite sure that the man lost nothing by his generosity.

Crockett now tried to find the ill-fated boats. The larger one had been seen about fifty miles down the river. Men had tried to land it, but it was as obstinate as ever. The search proved futile, and thus ended the career of our hero as a lumberman.

Crockett, it appears, never forgot Colonel Alexander's beating him for Congress by two votes, and secretly nourished the ambition to some day get even with the Colonel by beating him at the polls.

Soon after Crockett's return from his unhappy experience on the Mississippi, it again came time to choose a Congressman in Crockett's district. Colonel Alexander was once more a candidate, and against him was pitted William Arnold, a major general of the militia and a brilliant lawyer.

[...] Crockett's chance of beating two such big men seemed very small, for he had once before been beaten, and since his loss in the lumber venture, he hadn't a dollar to his name. It took money then, as it does now, to run for office.

One thing favored the bear hunter. When Colonel Alexander beat him two years before, cotton was twenty-five cents a pound, and Colonel Alexander had made the people believe that the tariff law he had voted for was the cause of this high figure; but now the price was down almost to six cents, and he couldn't use that argument any more.

So Crockett made up his mind to "go in and win." A friend and admirer lent him one hundred and fifty dollars, and that sum went a long way in those days.

His electioneering was much like that in his former campaigns. During the three months it lasted he rode over the district, a large one embracing eleven counties; he attended fairs, shooting matches, and hunting contests. Here he met the people, most of whom were like himself, poor and illiterate. They were the sort of people who would be much more impressed by the fine figure and face of the renowned hunter, clad in his homespun and coonskin cap, than by the fine manners and eloquent tongues of the Congressman and the soldier-lawyer.

Everywhere Davy went his fame as an Indian fighter and bear hunter went ahead of him, and when the people actually met him, and caught the



From a painting in the Capitol at Austin, Texas.

DAVY THE BEAR-HUNTER.

"I have always found that it is a very important thing for a man who is fairly going ahead, to know exactly how far to go, and when to stop."
— Davy Crockett.

humor of his eye and the honest ring of his voice, and heard his quaint language and apt stories, they were irresistibly won over to him.

Here is an incident of the campaign that illustrates Crockett's quick wit. One day the three candidates were to appear on the same platform. Crockett had to speak first. He could not discuss great public questions intelligently, for he knew too little about them, so he spent his time in giving a homely talk, made up mostly of witty anecdotes; then, when he had everybody in a good humor, he quit.

Colonel Alexander followed with a long-winded speech, defending his course in Congress, and never once referring to Crockett or what he had said. Last came General Arnold who, in lawyer-like phrase, proceeded to argue against the position of Colonel Alexander. Neither man paid the least attention to Crockett. This provoked "the candidate from the canebrakes."

Near the close of the General's talk a flock of guinea fowls passed close to the crowd and their cries annoyed the speaker, so he stopped while the birds were being driven away. When he finished his speech, Crockett arose, and, in tones so loud that all could hear, he said, addressing the General:—

"Well, General, you are the first man I ever saw that understood the language of fowls. You had not the politeness even to name me in your speech. But when my little friends, the guinea hens, came up and began to holler 'Crockett, Crockett, Crockett,' you were ungenerous enough to drive them all away."

If you have heard the cry of the guinea hen, you will understand how this would raise a hearty laugh at the expense of the General, and how the effect of his speech must have been lost, for if there is any trait that is conspicuous in the native, untutored backwoodsman, it is the love of fair play.

The story of Colonel Crockett's misfortune in the loss of his boats and lumber got abroad throughout the district, and won him the sympathy of many, particularly as he was not heard to complain of his misfortunes, but to keep right on doing his best as an honest man.

Crockett took care not to side too strongly with either of the political parties. His ready wit enabled him to keep neutral, as it were, and not commit himself. Every one knew that he was independent and couldn't be bought, that he wouldn't "wear any man's collar," and that, when he came to vote on any great question, he could be

depended on to vote as his conscience told him to and not as some party leaders dictated.

The two great parties then were the Republican party, afterward known as the Democratic party, which followed General Jackson, and two years after this elected him President of the United States; and the Whig party, or the party of John Quincy Adams, then President, and of Henry Clay, which later, in 1856, under William Henry Harrison, came to be known as the Republican party.

The Jackson party was the popular party in Tennessee, of course, because Jackson was a Tennessean and born amid the privations and poverty of the West. The Adams party was the aristocratic party, and to that class of people most of the men of wealth and education belonged.

General Jackson, the hero of the Creek War and of the battle of New Orleans, was the idol of the great masses of the people of Tennessee. No candidate could hope to succeed who opposed Jackson. Strangely enough, the fact that in the State Legislature Crockett had voted against Jackson for the Senate, does not appear to have endangered the chances of the bear hunter. Perhaps it was because he made it known that, while he had no love for Jackson, he was for him so long

as the great leader did the right thing; but he made it equally well known that no man, not even "Old Hickory," could lead him where he did not believe it right to go.

When the votes were counted, Colonel Crockett was found to have won, with twenty-seven hundred and forty-eight votes to spare. So unexpected and so startling was his victory, it at once made him famous throughout the whole country. Everywhere people were talking and reading of Davy Crockett, the Indian fighter and bear hunter, who, rude and illiterate as he was, was going to Washington, to represent one hundred thousand people of his state, and to help make laws for the Great Republic.

CHAPTER XI

CROCKETT AS CONGRESSMAN

THE first question that confronted Crockett after he was chosen to go to Washington was — how was he ever to reach there? Congress was to convene in December (1827); it was too far for him to go on foot or on horseback, and he had no money. The hundred and fifty dollars his kind friend had lent him had long since been spent in election expenses. He could not hope to earn the money in the few months before he must start, and he was already in debt. But the difficulty was bridged when this same good friend came forward with another hundred dollars, and Davy, in high spirits, set off for Washington on the regular stage. On the way he met some old friends and made many new ones, and by his rollicking good humor he made the long journey one of constant entertainment for all who came in contact with him.

When he reached Washington, then a squalid, unkempt town of twenty thousand people, the

first thing Crockett did was to draw two hundred and fifty dollars of his pay and send it back to the good friend who had so generously come to his assistance. Speaking of this, Crockett says, "I sent this money with a mighty good will; for I reckon nobody in this world loves a friend better than me, or remembers a kindness longer."

We will pass over our hero's two years in Congress, which covered the years 1828 and 1829, with only the observation that in Washington he won the same reputation for independence and outspoken honesty that he had won in his state, and that everywhere he was sought out and talked about as a unique character. He was never accounted a statesman, but always a great hunter and fighter, with a marvelous command of backwoods repartee and an inexhaustible fund of good humor and jolly stories; but best of all, he was regarded as an honest man.

The newspapers throughout the country bristled with his anecdotes and quaint sayings, while pictures of him and histories of his career were eagerly sought by all classes. The natural result was that many things were told and written of him that were either untrue or gross exaggerations. To such an extent was he thus held up to view as a buffoon, or a curiosity, that he had to take steps publicly to

deny things reported of him, since many of these stories found their way back to Tennessee and were circulated there to make his people ashamed of him.

In 1829 Crockett went home to try for a second term in Congress, and this time his people sent him back to Washington with a majority greater than before. But in this second Congress he was to incur the enmity of the great Jackson, who had become our Chief Executive.

President Jackson wanted Congress to pass a bill removing the Cherokees and other Indians from territory east of the Mississippi. Crockett disagreed with the President and his party and decided to vote against the bill. His friends urged him not to oppose Jackson. They pointed out how popular the President was throughout the country and especially in Tennessee, his home state, and how he had set his heart on carrying out this measure. They predicted that, if Crockett persisted, his home people would object, and that he would never again win their favor and support.

Here Crockett showed that "Go ahead" was not merely his motto but the ruling principle of his life. He believed the President wrong, and said that, if he lost everything in voting against his chief, he still would vote as he thought right.

The prophets were not mistaken. They foretold the truth. When he came up for Congress the third time, in the summer of 1831, Crockett found that all the friends and supporters of Jackson had turned against him; and, what was more, the legislature had changed the boundaries of his district so as to include eighteen counties in all, some of which were depended on to defeat him.

When the votes were counted, it was found that the result in seventeen of the counties was in his favor, but that Madison County had voted so heavily against him he was beaten in the total by seventy votes.

In Madison County, amid the cottonwood swamps, lived the Murrell outlaws, a gang of river gamblers, horse thieves, escaped criminals, and cutthroats, the worst sort that ever blighted a country. They and their allies worked, fought, and voted against honest Davy Crockett and accomplished his defeat.

So Davy Crockett became a private citizen again. No doubt he felt disappointed, for he was becoming accustomed to public life; but he could go to his corn-planting and bear-killing with a clear conscience and a knowledge that he had done fearlessly and honestly what he believed to be his duty.

And now let us take an intimate look at this man

who, springing from the most obscure origin, had climbed, unaided by education, wealth, or influence, to nation-wide fame. We will quote the words of one who visited him at this time:—

“Some time in the month of —, in the year —, while traveling through the Western District, I heard Colonel Crockett, the great bear hunter, so frequently mentioned that I determined to visit him. Obtaining directions, I left the highroad and sought his residence. My route, for many miles, lay through a country uninteresting from its sameness; and I found myself on the morning of the third day within eight miles of Colonel Crockett’s. Having refreshed myself and horse, I set out to spend the remainder of the day with him, pursuing a small blazed trail which bore no marks of being often traveled, and jogged on, wondering what sort of a reception I should meet with from a man who, by quirky humors unequaled, had obtained for himself a never-dying reputation.

“The character which had been given of the Colonel, both by his friends and foes, induced me to hope for a kind welcome; but doubting, — for I still believed him a bear in appearance, — I pursued my journey until a small opening brought me in sight of a cabin which, from description, I identified as the home of the celebrated hunter of the West.

“It was in appearance rude and uninviting, situated in a small field of eight or ten acres, which had been cleared in the wild woods; no yard surrounded it, and it seemed to have been lately settled. In the passage of the house were seated two men in their shirt sleeves, cleaning rifles. I

strained my eyes as I rode up to see if I could identify in either of them the great bear hunter; but before I could decide, my horse had stopped at the bars, and there walked out, in plain homespun attire, with a black fur cap on, a finely proportioned man, about six feet high, aged, from appearance, forty-five. His countenance was frank and manly, and a smile played over it as he approached me. He brought with him a rifle, and from his right shoulder hung a bag made of raccoon skin, to which, by means of a sheath, was appended a huge butcher's knife.

“‘This is Colonel Crockett's residence, I presume?’

“‘Yes, sir.’

“‘Have I the pleasure of seeing that gentleman before me?’

“‘If it be a pleasure, you have, sir.’

“‘Well, Colonel, I have ridden much out of my way to spend a day or two with you, and take a hunt.’

“‘Get down, sir; I am delighted to see you; I like to see strangers; and the only care I have is, that I cannot accommodate them as well as I could wish. I have no corn; you see I've but lately moved here; but I'll make my little boy take your horse over to my son-in-law's; he is a good fellow, and will take care of him.’ Walking in, — ‘My brother, let me make you acquainted with Mr. — of —; my wife, Mr. —; my daughters, Mr. —. You see, we are mighty rough here. I am afraid you will think it hard times, but we have to do the best we can. I started mighty poor, and have been rooting long ever since; what I live upon always, I think a friend can for a day or two. I have but little, but that little is as free as the water that runs — so make yourself at home. Here are newspapers and some books.’

“His free mode of conversation made me feel quite easy ; and a few moments gave me leisure to look around. His cabin within was clean and neat, and bore about it many marks of comfort. The many trophies of wild animals spread over his house and yard, his dogs — in appearance war-worn veterans, lying about sunning themselves — all told truly that I was at the home of the celebrated hunter.

“His family were dressed by the work of their own hands ; and there was a neatness and simplicity in their appearance very becoming. His wife was rather grave and quiet, but attentive and kind to strangers ; his daughters diffident and retiring, perhaps too much so, but uncommonly beautiful, and fine specimens of the native worth of the female character ; for, entirely uneducated, they were not only agreeable but fascinating.

“There are no schools near them, yet they converse well — and if they did not one would be apt to think so, for they are extremely pretty, and tender to a stranger, sharing with so much kindness the comforts of their little cabin. The Colonel has no slaves ; his daughters attend to the dairy and kitchen, while he performs the more laborious duties of his farm. He has but lately moved where he now resides, and consequently had to fix anew. He took me over his little field of corn, which he himself had cleared and grubbed, talked of the quantity he should make, his peas, pumpkins, etc., with the same pleasure that a Mississippi planter would have shown me his cotton estate, or a James River Virginia planter would have carried me over his wide inheritance.

“The newspapers being before us, called up the subject of politics. I held in high estimation the present administration of our country. To this he was opposed. His views,

however, delighted me; and, were they more generally adopted, we should not be losers. He was opposed to the administration, and yet conceded that many of its acts were wise and efficient, and would have received his cordial support.

"He admired Mr. Clay, but had objections to him. He was opposed to the tariff, yet, I think, a supporter of the bank. He seemed to have the most horrible objection to binding himself to any man, or set of men. He said he would as lief be an old coon dog, as to be obliged to do what any man, or set of men, would tell him was right. The present administration he would support as far as he would any other; and that was, as far as he believed its views to be correct. He would pledge himself to support no administration; when the will of his constituents was known to him, it was his law; when unknown, his judgment was his guide.

"I remarked to him that his district was so thorough-going for Jackson I thought he would never be elected.

"He said, 'he didn't care, he believed his being left out was of service to him, for it had given him time to go to work; he had cleared his corn field, dug a well, built his cabins,' etc., and, says he, 'if they won't elect me with my opinions, I can't help it.'"

During the next two years Colonel Crockett remained at home, writing the story of his own life, and laying his plans for the next congressional election; for he decided not to stay whipped. By this time he had come to be a popular, if not polished, stump speaker. The way he shot his points into the minds of his hearers proved him to be ex-

pert with a weapon other than a rifle. Then, too, his four years in Washington had taught him much, so that he did not appear quite the backwoodsman he once was.

Crockett's fourth campaign for a seat in Congress was in 1833, and was not unlike the one that preceded it in which he had been beaten. He was opposed by all the Jackson forces, namely, by the newspapers, politicians, and small-fry lawyers of the district.

As usual, he attended the barbecues and shooting matches which were the great gathering places of the people. And as usual his wit and ready repartee, together with his now well-established reputation for honesty and independence, gained him votes.

In the election that followed this campaign Crockett surprised the country by beating the Jackson forces by two hundred and two votes.

Again he went to Washington and became more than ever the idol of those who opposed what they termed Jackson's high-handed disregard of the Constitution. People called Davy "the honest Congressman," "the supporter of the Constitution," and indeed there were some who, under their breath, began to hint that the great bear hunter might make a good President!

In relating his attitude toward President Jackson, Crockett said he proposed to follow Jackson so long as Jackson went straight; then he told the story of the farmer who directed his son to plow straight toward the red cow that was standing in a far corner of the field. The lad obeyed to the letter. But the cow wouldn't stand still; it wandered all over the field, the lad following. When the father saw the crooked furrow, he was of course enraged and scolded the boy. The lad's excuse was that his father had told him "to plow to the red cow" and he had obeyed, but that she wouldn't stand still, and in obeying his orders he had to follow the cow all over the lot. Colonel Crockett didn't propose to make a crooked furrow in order to follow General Jackson's lead!

CHAPTER XII

A WONDERFUL JOURNEY

AT this time there was great curiosity throughout the country to see Colonel Crockett, the Congressman from the backwoods of Tennessee, who dared to stand out against "Old Hickory." Particularly was this so in the North and East. Jackson had the most enemies in those sections, because many of his measures appeared to be aimed at them. Crockett, on his part, was curious also to see the people of these sections. He had been taught to think of them as tricksters in trade, hypocrites in religion, and selfishly opposed to a true democratic government. But in Congress he had met many men from New England and elsewhere, and he had liked them so well that he wondered what sort of people they represented.

His health not being good, his physician told him to quit his work at Washington and travel. This gave him the needed excuse, and he decided to visit the great cities of the Atlantic Coast. He first took the stage to Baltimore, where, on his

arrival, April 25, 1834, he was cordially received and entertained at Barnum's Hotel. The next morning he went, by boat and rail, to Philadelphia.

The seventeen miles of railroad from Delaware City to Chesapeake Bay was the first he had seen. As he says, it was "a clean new sight" to him. It was only nine years before this that the first locomotive had been brought from England. Perhaps the train and the track on which Crockett rode would surprise us as much as it did him. The rails were flat. The smokestack of the engine was as big as the boiler. Just behind the engine came a flat car that carried the wood and water with which to make the steam. Then followed several cars that looked like the four-in-hand coaches of that day. Crockett said the engine "wheezed like it had the tizzick" and that she "went with a blue streak after us."

The approach to Philadelphia was by boat. Most of the way Crockett stood on deck with the captain who pointed out to him the objects of interest they passed. As the boat neared the city the Colonel noticed that the crew were dressing her with flags. On asking the captain what it meant, he was told that this was to tell the people that Crockett was on board. When the docks came in view, they were black with people, and when the

captain pointed him out to the great crowd craning their necks to see him, a great huzza went up that filled Davy with astonishment and made him "feel," as he said, "sort of queer."

As he landed the crowd surged about him, crying, "Give me the hand of an honest man!" Finally he was rescued from his enthusiastic admirers, hurried into a barouche drawn by four fine horses, and driven through streets full of cheering people to the United States Hotel, where a surging mob in the street would not leave till he had appeared on the balcony and told them that on the following day he would speak to them. Writing of this experience, he says, "I thought I would rather be in the wilderness, with my gun and my dogs, than to be attracting all that fuss. I had never seen the like before, and did not know exactly what to say or do." But he decided to trust to the good luck that had got him "through many a scrape before."

The next day Crockett made good his promise, and spoke to five thousand people at the Exchange. When the speech was finished, he was given three times three cheers and thousands shook his hand. Philadelphia cordially hated Jackson, and its way of showing it was to honor that other Tennessean of lowly birth who, in the teeth of angry scorn and protest, dared stand out against him.

Crockett said that seeing the great throng in the street, as he was going to the Exchange, he almost wished to take back his promise to make a speech, but that he was prevented from doing so by having a youngster say, as he passed, "Go ahead, Davy Crockett." With these two words of his motto, "Go ahead," ringing in his ears, he said to himself, "I have faced the enemy; these are friends. I have fronted the savage red man of the forest; these are civilized. I'll keep cool and let them have it."

That evening Crockett attended a theater and saw a play called "Jim Crow." But he said it wouldn't compare, in dancing and fun, with an all-night country dance back in Tennessee.

The next day some Philadelphians gave him a forty-dollar seal for a watch-charm, bearing a design showing two racing horses, and over them the words "Go ahead." At the same time a number of young Whigs called and asked him to tell them the points of a good rifle, as they wished to have one made for him. Crockett told them that a rifle was an article he knew something about, and gave them the size, weight, etc. Later, as we shall see, a beautiful rifle, made after the great hunter's specifications, was placed in his hands.

On the eve of Colonel Crockett's departure for

New York, which was on April 29, the proprietor of the United States Hotel gave his guest and friends a "pick-nick supper, which means," said Crockett, "as much as me and all my company could eat and drink and nothing to pay."

At New York, which he declared was "a bulger of a place," the great hunter-Congressman was welcomed by another enthusiastic reception. He was taken to the Battery and shown the shipping in the harbor. The masts of the ships looked to him "like the dead trunks of so many trees in a clearing." He attended the theater and saw the noted actress, Fanny Kemble, whom he described as "like a handsome piece of changeable silk."

That night, after returning to his hotel, the fire-bells rang out and Davy rushed for his hat and coat. He wanted to help put out the fire! His friends held him back. "Ain't you going to help put it out?" he asked, wonderingly. "No," replied his friends, "we have fire companies here and we leave it to them." That seemed queer to Davy, for had a fire occurred in his country he would have jumped on a horse bareback and would have ridden full-flight to help put it out.

While in New York some friends took Crockett to a shooting match in Jersey City. Every one of course wanted to see Davy handle a rifle, and he

was asked to shoot. The target was set at one hundred yards with a rest. Davy lifted his gun and, firing offhand, sent a shot within two inches of the bull's-eye. Since his usual distance was forty yards without a rest, and he was handling a strange gun, the feat was considered remarkable. Then some one put up a silver quarter, and Davy ruined it at the first shot.

Then the distinguished traveler went by boat to Providence, and from there forty miles by coach to Boston, making the run in four hours.

In Boston, Crockett stopped at the Tremont House. He visited Faneuil Hall, the "Cradle of Liberty," and said of it, "God grant that the liberty-tree bough on which this cradle rocks may never break!"

He paid a visit to the good ship *Constitution*, which in the war of 1812 had sunk the British ship *Guerrière* and settled the proposition that, man for man and ship for ship, America was equal to the best on earth in a sea fight.

He went to the battle-field of Bunker Hill, where a grateful people were then erecting a monument. Davy said, "I felt like calling them [the patriot soldiers] up, and asking them to tell me how to help to protect the liberty they bought for us with their blood; but as I could not do so, I resolved, on

that holy ground, to go for my country, always and everywhere."

Some of his admirers wanted him to visit Harvard College at Cambridge, but he refused "for fear they would tack an LL.D. after his name," as they had in the case of Jackson. He made a speech at the State House on Boston Common before an immense crowd and was cheered to the echo. When he left Boston, it was with a heart full of pride and gratitude.

Colonel Crockett returned home by the way of Philadelphia. When he reached there, the young men who had inquired of him as to the proper weight and dimensions of a good rifle, gave him a splendid weapon with all its accouterments, as well as a beautiful knife and a tomahawk of razor steel.

On accepting the rifle Colonel Crockett made a speech in which he said: —

"Gentlemen: I receive this rifle from the young men of Philadelphia as a testimony of friendship, which I hope never to live to forget. This is a favorite article with me, and would have been my choice above all presents that could have been selected. I love a good gun, for it makes a man feel independent, and prepared either for war or peace.

"This rifle does honor to the gentleman who made it. I must say, long as I have been accustomed to handle a gun, I have never seen anything that could come near a comparison to her in beauty. I cannot think that ever such a rifle

was made, either in this or any other country; and how, gentlemen, to express my gratitude to you for your splendid present, I am at a loss. This much, however, I will say, that myself and my sons will not forget you while we use this token of your kindness for our amusement. If it should become necessary to use her in defense of the liberty of our country, in my time, I will do as I have done before; and if the struggle should come when I am buried in the dust, I will leave her in the hands of some who will honor your present in company with your sons, in standing for our country's rights."

Two days later the people of Philadelphia celebrated the Fourth of July, and Crockett being in the city, he was compelled to make three speeches in company with some of the greatest orators of the day, among them Daniel Webster. He afterward said that nothing could have stimulated him to do this but the fact that he was in Philadelphia, that it was the Fourth of July, and that he was "in sight of the old State House and Independence Square, where the fathers of our country met, as it were, with halters on their necks, and subscribed their names to the Declaration of Independence."

The next day Colonel Dupont, the great powder maker, presented Crockett with a dozen canisters of the best sportsman's powder.

Crockett journeyed from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, arriving there in the night. After a few



INDEPENDENCE HALL.

"I was stimulated by being in sight of the old Statehouse and Independence Square, where the fathers of our country met, as it were, with halteres on their necks, and subscribed their names to that glorious Declaration of Independence." — Davy Crockett.

hours spent with friends, he boarded an Ohio River steamboat and started down that river, making friends with captain, crew, and passengers, by asking and answering questions, and "swapping yarns."

The people at Wheeling, Cincinnati, and Louisville eagerly awaited his coming, and at each place he was surrounded by crowds who demanded that he should make a speech. At Louisville he addressed the largest crowd which, up to that time, had ever gathered in that city. On the 22d of July, 1834, he reached Mill's Point, Tennessee, where his son William met him, and together they drove the thirty-five miles to his home.

Referring to this home-coming, Crockett writes: "In a short time I set out for my own home; yes, my own home, my own soil, and my own humble dwelling, my own family, my own hearts, my own ocean of love and affection which neither circumstances nor time can dry up. Here, like the wearied bird, let me settle down for a while, and shut out the world."

CHAPTER XIII

CROCKETT IN DEFEAT

WE can imagine the surprise and joy of the wife and children and the astonishment of the neighbors as they beheld the man who had gone out from them a rough, illiterate backwoodsman, now returned to them a man of national renown who had been feasted and petted by the rich and the great of North and East, with a broadened knowledge and the self-poise that comes from travel and mingling with men.

With what eager curiosity must they have touched the beautiful rifle, the like of which had never been seen or dreamed of in Tennessee, and the long glistening knife and tomahawk, the best the workers in steel could make.

But all that Crockett had gone through had not spoiled him in the least. He was the same Davy, though more serious, more thoughtful, and more eager to make something of himself in the great world whose good opinion he had earned by honest work and by living up to his motto, "Go ahead."

A few days after his return he tried his beautiful rifle on a fine buck, and brought him down at one hundred and thirty steps. Not a bad shot, you say. Not a bad gun, says Davy.

After a little practice he tried the new gun at a shooting match. We quote Davy's own description of such a match as held in Western Tennessee in his day:—

“In the latter part of summer our cattle get very fat, as the range is remarkably fine; and some one, desirous of raising money on one of his cattle, advertises that on a particular day, and at a given place, a first-rate beef will be shot for.

“When the day comes, every marksman in the neighborhood will meet at the appointed place, with his gun. After the company has assembled, a subscription paper is handed round, with the following heading:

“‘A. B. offers a beef worth twenty dollars, to be shot for, at twenty-five cents a shot.’ Then the names are put down by each person, thus:

D. C. puts in four shots	\$1.00
E. F. puts in eight shots	2.00
G. H. puts in two shots	0.50

“And thus it goes round, until the price is made up.

“Two persons are then selected, who have not entered for shots, to act as judges of the match. Every shooter gets a board, and makes a cross in the center of his target. The shot that drives the center, or comes nearest to it, gets the hide and tallow, which is considered the first choice. The next nearest gets his choice of the hind quarters; the third gets the other hind quarter; the fourth takes choice of the

fore quarters ; the fifth, the remaining quarter ; and the sixth gets the lead in the tree against which we shoot.

“The judges stand near the tree, and when a man fires they cry out, ‘Who shot?’ and the shooter gives in his name ; and so on, till all have shot. The judges then take all the boards, and go off by themselves, and decide what quarter each man has won. Sometimes one will get nearly all.”

On his return home from his third term in Congress, Davy put on his hunting clothes and went into the woods, thinking that again he could follow his dogs after the bear and the deer and the wild turkey, but to his surprise he found the sport did not appeal to him as once it did. As he wandered through the marshes looking for bear, his mind was on the sights of the city, the great cheering crowds, the pretty speeches made to him, the flattery, and the praise. He heard himself called “the supporter of the Constitution,” “the honest Congressman,” “the brave politician,” and he felt the desire to go back ; and who could say but that the people of his party might turn to him to beat Jackson for the Presidency ! Another-Congressional election was to take place in the fall. He would run again. He had no fear but what the honest and true men of his district, who knew him to be brave and sincere, would return him to his seat in Congress with an increased majority.

But Davy reckoned without his host. From being a supporter of Jackson, he had become his bitter foe, while the people of Tennessee were still for Jackson. The campaign was conducted as before. Davy spoke to the people in much the old way, but now with more knowledge of what he was talking about. He still had his stories and his wit; he carried his beautiful rifle and showed he had not lost his skill as a marksman; he still wore the foxskin cap, the fringed leather leggins, and the hunting shirt. But the people could not forgive him for opposing their idol, General Jackson, and he lost by two hundred and thirty votes.

Davy's defeat was a bitter disappointment to him. He had become used to public life and his appetite for politics, he said, "was about as sharp set as a sawmill"; more than that, he believed there were still bigger things in store for him. In this defeat he saw his hopes wither and fly away. His enemies of the Jackson party were triumphant. Davy railed and stormed. He charged that the election was stolen, and that votes for his opponent were bought at twenty-five dollars a head. And probably, if the facts were known, he really was beaten by fraud, for of all the men who opposed "Old Hickory," Davy Crockett was the most disliked and the most feared.

Leaving our hero sulking in his cabin, we will take a glance at a new country far to the west and south on which ere long his restless eye became fixed.

At the opening of the nineteenth century Texas was a vast, unknown region save to the Spaniards, Mexicans, and Indians, and to a few thousand adventurous Americans. The Spaniards had established missions on the Gulf Coast as long before as the year 1700, and a little later they built their adobe mission houses some distance in the interior. These houses were built like forts, for the Comanches and Apaches who occupied the country looked with fierce hatred upon the newcomers, who came, they said, not only to convert them to Christianity, but to rob them of their homes and their hunting grounds.

These adobe houses, or castles, withstood all attacks of the Indians; and, as we look upon them to-day and see the skill shown in their construction, we can well understand how they could hold out against an enemy whose chief weapons were the bow and arrow and the tomahawk.

As was natural, when the tide of American emigration began to push out beyond the Mississippi, there came a conflict between the Mexicans, who were Spanish, and of whose country Texas was a part, and the hardy frontiersmen.

Then came a dispute between Mexico and the United States as to the boundary line. This dispute settled, the quarrel still went on between the two races. The Mexicans, known as "greasers," were hated by the Americans, and the hatred was repaid on the other side twofold. The Mexicans were ignorant, deceitful, treacherous, and tyrannical. The men sent from Mexico City to govern Texas were braggarts, — unscrupulous and bloodthirsty. They stole and killed without conscience and without fear.

On the other hand, the American settlers of the early days were little better. Indeed, they could hardly be called settlers at all. Among the twenty thousand or less Americans in Texas in 1833 were, of course, some earnest, industrious, well-meaning men, but the great majority were adventurers of the worst type. There were pirates and outlaws from the bayous of Louisiana, gamblers and sharpers from the Mississippi, cut-throats and robbers driven from the settlements on the western slopes of the Alleghanies, as well as escaped criminals and refugees from the Eastern States. Indeed, taking the Mexicans and Americans together, perhaps no uglier spot could then be found on the face of the earth than Texas. No wonder that it became known as "the bloody

ground," and that, when a criminal of the North or East escaped, it was always said, "He has gone to Texas."

Consider, then, such men living in a country ruled over by ignorant, vicious, and bloodthirsty men, and you will learn the cause of the constant stories of plunder and outrage that were wafted back to older settlements on every wing, and that fanned the passions of the half-savage men of the American frontiers, until soon a great stream of fighting Americans poured out of the mountains and the forests, bound for Texas.

In 1833 the Americans in Texas decided to strike for independence and cast off forever the hated Mexican yoke. They met and prepared a State Constitution and issued an address to the Mexican government.

General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, one of the worst characters in all history, was then at the head of the Mexican government. He was at that time thirty-five years old. At the age of twenty-three he had been a lieutenant colonel in the Spanish army.

The revolution was now on. The Americans organized a government; Henry Smith was elected governor, and Sam Houston was made commander in chief. San Antonio was taken December 10,

1835, and in a short time the Mexican army was out of Texas.

On December 20, at Goliad, the Texas Declaration of Independence was issued. Then in the spring of 1836 Santa Anna, at the head of seven thousand five hundred men, marched out of the City of Mexico, bound for Texas, to drive the Americans out of the country and regain his lost territory.

This was the news that, coming to the ears of Davy Crockett in his peaceful home on the Obion, stirred all the fighting blood that was in him, and caused him to shoulder the beautiful rifle that at Philadelphia he had said he would "use if need be for his country's glory," and start for Texas. In speaking of his decision he says, "My life has been one of danger, toil, and privation, but these difficulties I had to encounter at a time when I considered it nothing more than right good sport to surmount them; but now I start anew upon my own hook, and God only grant that it may be strong enough to support the weight that may be hung upon it. I have a new row to hoe, a long and rough one, but come what will I'll go ahead."

At this time Crockett's feelings found an outlet in verse. He says in excuse that "sorrow will make even an oyster feel poetical." When he

finished writing, the lines looked to him "as zig-zag as a worm fence," so he showed them to a literary friend who polished them up a bit. Here are two of the verses:—

"Farewell to the mountains whose mazes to me
Were more beautiful far than Eden could be;
No fruit was forbidden, but Nature had spread
Her bountiful board, and her children were fed.
The hills were our garnerers — our herds wildly grew,
And Nature was shepherd and husbandman too.
I felt like a monarch, yet thought like a man,
As I thanked the Great Giver, and worshiped his plan.

"The home I forsake where my offspring arose;
The graves I forsake where my children repose;
The home I redeemed from the savage and wild;
The home I have loved as a father his child;
The corn that I planted, the fields that I cleared,
The flocks that I raised, and the cabin I reared;
The wife of my bosom — Farewell to ye all!
In the land of the stranger I rise or I fall."

It is difficult to understand this eccentric man. He certainly loved his family. In his own story of his life he often speaks of them in the tenderest way. But he appears never to have considered them in his plans. For the greater part of six years he had been away from them, and now that he could stay at home and be a husband and helper to the good wife who uncomplainingly kept the

little home and farm during all his long absences, and a father to the children who were growing up to manhood and womanhood, he decided to leave them again for a dangerous adventure in the borderland of Texas.

We can see tears in the eyes of all, Davy included, as the husband and father, having burnished up his rifle and knife, and donned his foxskin cap with its tail dangling behind, and his fringed leggins and hunting shirt, kissed them all good-by, and disappeared on the forest trail to the Mississippi River, never to return.

CHAPTER XIV

STARTING FOR TEXAS

ON reaching the Mississippi at Mill's Point, a day's tramp through the forest, Davy Crockett boarded a steamer, *The Mediterranean*, one of the best of the river boats, bound down the river. His first objective point was Little Rock, Arkansas, as that time only a small settlement about three hundred miles from the mouth of the Arkansas River. To reach it he must go down the Mississippi to where the Arkansas joins it and then up the latter river.

On the boat he was the center of interest, for his fund of stories was inexhaustible and his good humor, which misfortune was powerless to destroy, could be depended on to lighten the monotony of a long journey. The talk was mostly of the trouble in Texas. Many whom Davy met were, like him, on their way to join in the struggle to free Texas from Mexican rule.

While the steamer was resting off Helena, during some bad weather, a number of those on board

drew up and signed a paper by which they pledged themselves to pay \$90,000 into a fund to be used for the purpose of aiding their countrymen already in the field, and to be further used in recruiting five companies of two hundred and fifty men each. Crockett did not have the money to subscribe, but one of the ten-thousand-dollar subscriptions was made by three men with the understanding that it was to be known as Crockett's personal subscription. The fund itself was known as the "Crockett Fund," and every dollar subscribed was afterward paid in.

When he reached Little Rock, it soon became known that the celebrated Colonel Crockett was at the tavern, and there was the usual curiosity to see him, and to witness some of his widely heralded feats with the rifle. A shooting match was therefore arranged. The best shots in the neighborhood were there. Each of these took a turn at the target and then they called on Davy. With the air of one asked to do an everyday, easy thing, he carelessly lifted his beautiful "Betsey" (the name he gave his rifle), and to his own surprise the bullet struck exactly in the center of the bull's-eye. "There's no mistake in Betsey," he remarked in a careless way. Every one expressed surprise and admiration, but one man ventured

to remark, "Colonel, that must have been a chance shot." Crockett replied, "I can do it five times out of six any day in the week." Crockett knew he was exaggerating, but he thought he might as well tell a "big one" while he was telling one.

There were some present who evidently had doubts of Davy's ability to repeat the performance and they wanted another match. Davy was slow to consent, but finally he did, and with much fear of the result. We will let Davy tell the story of the second trial which is not at all to his credit:—

"When it came to my turn, I squared myself, and, turning to the prime shot, I gave him a knowing nod, by way of showing my confidence; and, says I, 'Look out for the bull's-eye, stranger.' I blazed away, and I wish I may be shot if I didn't miss the target. They examined it all over, and could find neither hair nor hide of my bullet, and pronounced it a dead miss; when, says I, 'stand aside and let me look, and I warrant you I get on the right trail of the critter.' They stood aside, and I examined the bull's-eye pretty particular, and at length cried out, 'Here it is, there is no snakes if it ha'n't followed the very track of the other.' They said it was utterly impossible, but I insisted on their searching the hole, and I agreed to be stuck up as a mark myself if they did not find two bullets there. They searched, for my satisfaction, and sure enough it all came out just as I had told them; for I had picked up a bullet that had been fired, and stuck it deep into the hole, without any one perceiving it. They

were all perfectly satisfied that fame had not made too great a flourish of trumpets when speaking of me as a marksman; and they all said they had enough of shooting for that day."

From Little Rock, Crockett, astride a fine horse lent him by his new acquaintances, started for Fulton, a point on the Red River about one hundred and twenty miles to the southwest.

On crossing the Washita River he made the acquaintance, in an unusual way, of one of those hardy frontier missionaries of the early days who was peddling tracts among the Indians and rough men of the wilderness. When Davy came upon him, the poor fellow was sitting in a sulky in the middle of the stream, unable to go ahead or turn around, having tried to ford the stream in the wrong place. The man was all the while playing on a fiddle, "Hail, Columbia, happy land," and "Over the water to Charley." Crockett and his friends succeeded in getting the missionary safely out of his perilous position and then, the friends turning back home, the Colonel and the preacher rode on together for many miles. Crockett thus describes the ride:—

"I kept in company with the parson until we arrived at Greenville, and I do say, he was just about as pleasant an old gentleman to travel with, as any man who wasn't too particular could ask for. We talked about politics, religion,

and nature, farming, and bear hunting, and the many blessings that an all-bountiful Providence has bestowed upon our happy country. He continued to talk upon this subject, traveling over the whole ground as it were, until his imagination glowed, and his soul became full to overflowing; he checked his horse, and I stopped mine also, and a stream of eloquence burst forth from his aged lips such as I have seldom listened to; it came from the overflowing fountain of a pure and grateful heart. We were alone in the wilderness, but as he proceeded, it seemed to me as if the tall trees bent their tops to listen;—that the mountain stream laughed out joyfully as it bounded on like some living thing; that the fading flowers of autumn smiled, and sent forth fresher fragrance, as if conscious that they would revive in spring, and even the sterile rocks seemed to be endued with some mysterious influence. We were alone in the wilderness, but all things told me that God was there. The thought renewed my strength and courage. I had left my country, felt somewhat like an outcast, believed that I had been neglected and lost sight of; but I was now conscious that there was still one watchful Eye over me; no matter whether I dwelt in the populous cities, or threaded the pathless forest alone; no matter whether I stood in the high places among men, or made my solitary lair in the untrodden wild, that Eye was still upon me. My very soul leaped joyfully at the thought; I never felt so grateful in all my life; I never loved my God so sincerely in all my life. I felt that I still had a friend.”

At Fulton, Crockett arranged to send back his horse and took a steamer down the Red River to Natchitoches, Louisiana. On the way he made

another interesting acquaintance and friend in the person of a gambler. Crockett himself was not a gambler and was opposed to gambling, but somehow he took to this fellow. Davy watched him for some time as the man, by clever juggling, succeeded in getting money from his fellow-passengers. The trick was played by the use of three thimbles and a pea. The wager by the innocent victim was laid on his being able, after the thimbles and pea were moved about on a board by the trickster, to tell which thimble the pea was under. By a little sleight-of-hand work the gambler would confuse his victim every time.

Crockett made the fellow's acquaintance, learned the story of his life, and induced him to give up gaming and go with him to Texas. He told him it was absurd for an able-bodied man, possessed of his full share of good sense, to voluntarily debase himself in that way. The fellow complained that it was impossible for him to live like an honest man at that time of his life. "I deny that," said Davy. "It is never too late to become honest. At any rate, you can go with me to Texas and die like a brave man, if need be." The man started from the table where they were sitting. "I'll be a man again," he cried. "Live honestly or die bravely! I go with you to Texas!"

Still another acquaintance, made at Natchitoches, was a bee-hunter, one of those persons who by long practice is able to follow the course of bees and so discover their hives. Honey trees were many in Texas and honey brought a high price, so a bee-hunter was a person of some importance. This man was something of a poet and a singer. Crockett took a liking to him and induced him to join the reformed gambler and himself on their journey.

So on horseback the three set out for Nacogdoches, a Spanish town one hundred and twenty miles to the west, in what is now the state of Texas.

Their trail, which the bee-hunter knew, led over prairies and through forests, and was known as the old Spanish road, though "road" at this time was hardly the right name, as part of the way it could only be made out by following blazed trees.

At Nacogdoches his horse became lame, so Crockett traded it for a mustang, one of those wiry little horses that in early days roamed wild in droves of thousands over the Texas prairies. The Indians captured them by means of lassos and they were so numerous that they could be had very cheap; indeed, when game was scarce, they

were used as food. When Davy sat astride his new mount, his feet nearly touched the ground.

The few days' stay in the Spanish town was enlivened by a little touch of sentiment. The bee-hunter had a sweetheart here, Katy by name. She was a blooming girl of eighteen and Crockett likens her to a wild flower of the prairie. When the three men were ready to depart, Katy appeared to say good-by, with a new deerskin jacket she had made for her lover, a fine gourd large enough to hold a gallon of water, and a small Bible. When leaving the tavern, Davy made a short speech to the company, in which he said, "I will die with my Betsey in my arms. No, I will not die — I'll grin down the walls of the Alamo, and the Americans will lick up the Mexicans like fine salt." The bee-hunter kissed his weeping Katy and leaped upon his horse, singing,

"Saddled and bridled and booted rode he,
A plume in his helmet, a sword at his knee."

Then, amid the huzzas of their friends, the three galloped away.

From Nacogdoches they pushed on nearly three hundred miles to San Antonio, passing over treeless prairies, fording rivers, and threading their way through immense canebrakes. Sometimes these

canebreaks extended for many miles, the trail through them being a mere path between walls of cane that grew to twenty feet in height and met at the top like a canopy.

At times they sighted wild animals such as wolves, buffaloes, deer, wild turkeys, and wild horses, and Crockett's natural impulse was to follow them. In this, however, he was restrained by his companions, who reminded him that he was in a strange country and that he would certainly lose his way.

At the home of an old woman where they stopped one night for supper they happened upon two other travelers. One was a raw-boned pirate in a sailor's jacket and tarpaulin hat, with disheveled, matted hair and beard, an ugly scar across his forehead and another across his right hand; the other was a young Indian, bareheaded and dressed in deerskin, who looked like a wild animal. The two men were on their way to join the army at San Antonio (then known as Bexar) as were Crockett and his companions. When the party was sitting down to supper, the gambler, or "Thimblrig" as Davy called him, protested that he would not sit down to the table with a pirate; whereupon the old sailor, drawing his long hunting knife and laying it on the table, calmly remarked, "Stranger, you had

better take a seat at the table, I think.” Thimblerrig was not slow to take the hint, and took a seat on the bench next to Crockett. Nothing better illustrates the make-up of the men of Texas of that day than this motley group which was made up of an ex-Congressman and soldier, a gambler, a poet, a pirate, and an Indian.

The five men now joined company, Crockett, the bee-hunter, and Thimblerrig on horses, the pirate and the Indian on foot. It was not long before the pedestrians were left behind, but they announced that they would reach the Alamo as soon as the horsemen did.

CHAPTER XV

CROCKETT'S LAST HUNT

ONE day at noon the three travelers were sitting about their camp fire, waiting for their dinner to cook, when the bee-hunter espied a bee. In a moment, to the surprise of his comrades, he was astride his horse and off across the prairie like a streak.

The sudden departure of the bee-hunter was soon followed by a rumbling like distant thunder. This, in turn, was followed by a strange appearance in the western sky, as of a rapidly approaching cloud of dust that appeared to hug the earth and sweep directly toward them.

"What can all this mean?" asked Crockett.

"Burn my old shoes if I know," replied Thimble-rig.

Running to the ponies that stood trembling with fear, they hurried them into a grove on a little rise of ground close at hand. They had just time in which to do this before there came down upon them an avalanche of shaggy forms moving

in a dark, shaggy, irresistible mass — buffaloes, four or five hundred of them, led by a great black bull with tail pointed straight out, nose almost grazing the earth, and projecting horns tearing up the turf. The sound of their hoofs beating on the ground and their bellowing made a sound like a continuous roll of thunder. It was frightful.

Had the men and horses been in their pathway on the open plain, nothing in the world could have saved them. As it was they stood on the little hill, awed and wondering spectators of the scene. "I never witnessed a sight more beautiful to the eye," says Davy. But the instinct of the hunter was still uppermost, and, as the black bull came on, Crockett's "Betsey" spoke, and with a great roar the big beast stopped, pawed the earth, and changed his course, followed by the entire herd.

Reloading his rifle and seizing the bridle of his frightened pony, he sprang upon the animal's back and was off after the game with the speed of the wind.

But the pace was too much for the mustang, as Davy in his excitement bent to the chase. With voice and spur he urged on his gallant little steed, but to no avail. Soon the great mass disappeared in a cloud of dust on the horizon, leaving the

panting pony and his rider alone on the prairie, miles from their starting point, for they had followed the chase for nearly two hours.

Most hunters would, at this point, have retraced their steps. Not so the man whose motto was "Go ahead." Allowing his pony a little rest, he pushed on for an hour or more when, all of a sudden, it dawned on him that he was lost. Crockett says his main anxiety, on making this discovery, was for Thimblorig, whom he had left alone in the little grove near the trail.

The country in which he found himself was a veritable paradise and, writing of it afterward, he said that he, at one point of great beauty, reined in his horse and looking about him, exclaimed, "God, what hast thou not done for man, and yet how little does he do for Thee! Not even repays Thee with gratitude."

After riding several hours without meeting a human being or finding a trail, he came upon a drove of wild horses, more than one hundred in number, that were quietly grazing on a beautiful, meadowlike prairie. As soon as the graceful creatures espied him they began neighing and coursing around him in circles which grew smaller and smaller, until he began to fear the consequences to himself. Davy's mustang fairly danced with

glee, and was not at all in favor of moving away from his new-found friends, and getting his rider safely out of his predicament. But sharp Spanish spurs soon brought him down to serious business. Crockett writes:—

“My little animal was full of fire and mettle, and as it was the first bit of genuine sport that he had had for some time, he appeared determined to make the most of it. He kept the lead for full half an hour, frequently neighing as if in triumph and derision. . . . A beautiful bay, who had trod close upon my heels the whole way, now came side by side with my mustang and we had it hip and thigh for about ten minutes, in such style as would have delighted the heart of a true lover of the turf. I now felt an interest in the race myself, and, for the credit of my bit of blood, determined to win it if it was at all in the nature of things. I plied the lash and spur, and the little critter took it quite kindly and tossed his head and neighed as much as to say, ‘Colonel, I know what you’re after — go ahead!’ — and he cut dirt in beautiful style, I tell you.

“This could not last forever. At length my competitor darted ahead somewhat . . . and my little fellow was compelled to clatter after his tail, like a needy politician after an officeholder when he wants his influence, and which my mustang found it quite as difficult to reach. He hung on like grim death for some time longer, but at last his ambition began to flag; and having lost ground, others seemed to think that he was not the mighty critter he was cracked up to be, no how, and they tried to outstrip him also. A second horse shot ahead and kicked up his heels in derision as he

passed us; then a third, a fourth, and so on, and even the scrubbiest little rascal in the whole drove was disposed to have a fling at their broken-down leader. . . . We now followed among the last of the drove until we came to the banks of the Navasota River. The foremost leaped from the margin into the rushing stream, the others, politician-like, followed him, though he would lead them to destruction; but my wearied animal fell on the banks completely exhausted."

After an hour's effort to get his pony again on his feet, Crockett gave it up and made preparation to camp for the night. Near by was a big tree that had been blown down. Among its branches a snug bed could be made for the night. With knife in hand he began beating among the branches, when a low growl startled him. Peering carefully about, he found his own eyes looking into the fiery eyes of a Mexican cougar. The beast was not more than half a dozen paces away, crouching for the spring. Rays of light darted from his large eyes, and his teeth glistened. There was not a moment to lose. To retreat was out of the question. Quick as a flash "Betsey" was at the hunter's shoulder and a shot went crashing on its way. A furious growl followed, and when Crockett looked to see the animal tumble to the earth, he saw him only shaking his head as if a bee had stung him. The shot had struck the forehead and

glanced off. Davy began at once to retreat, but before he had gone three steps the cougar sprang at him. Instinctively he stepped aside and, as the animal alighted on the ground, he struck him with the barrel of his rifle. But an unloaded gun was of no service, so he threw it down and grasped his big hunting knife. They were now at close quarters. The cougar was fastening his teeth into one of Crockett's arms when a knife thrust made him let go. Then, as Davy tells it,

"He wheeled about and came at me with increased fury, occasioned by the smarting of his wound. I now tried to blind him, knowing that if I succeeded he would become an easy prey; so as he approached me I watched my opportunity and aimed a blow at his eyes with my knife; but unfortunately it struck him on the nose, and he paid no other attention to it than by a shake of the head and a low growl. He pressed me close, and as I was stepping backward my foot tripped in a vine, and I fell to the ground. He was down upon me like a nighthawk on a June bug. He seized hold of the outer part of my right thigh, which afforded him considerable amusement; the hinder part of his body was towards my face; I grasped his tail with my left hand, and tickled his ribs with my knife which I held in my right. Still the critter wouldn't let go his hold, and as I found that he would lacerate my leg dreadfully unless he was speedily shaken off, I tried to hurl him down the bank into the river, for our scuffle was on its edge. I stuck my knife into his side and summoned all my strength to throw

him over. He resisted, and he was desperate heavy; but at last I got him so far down the declivity that he lost his balance, and he rolled over and over till he landed on the margin of the river, but in his fall he dragged me along with him. Fortunately, I fell uppermost and his neck presented a fair mark for my hunting knife. Without allowing myself time even to draw breath, I aimed one desperate blow at his neck, and the knife entered his gullet up to the handle, and reached his heart. He struggled for a few moments and died."

Davy said that bear fighting was mere child's play compared with this, and that he hoped this would prove to be his last cougar fight, as it was his first.

After washing his wound and getting his breath, he built a fire and prepared his supper, and then, wrapped in his horse blanket, sank exhausted into a sound sleep amid the branches of the tree he had fought so hard to possess.

In the morning his first thought was of the pony which he had left the evening before lying exhausted near the camp fire. His fear was that the creature had died during the night. But no pony was to be seen. It had disappeared without leaving "trace of hair or hide."

This was a bad predicament, surely. Alone on a boundless prairie and without the faintest idea of which way to go for succor. But Crockett had

been in peril before. To him fear was a stranger. He fully realized his danger, but calmly he set about getting his breakfast. A short distance away, on the river, he saw a flock of wild geese. It didn't take long to bring down a fat gander, strip him of his feathers, run a stick through him for a spit, and, resting this on two pronged sticks over a fire, prepare as luscious a roast goose as ever graced a table. He carried a little coffee and a tin cup and there was water close at hand. So, though lost on the prairie and deserted by his pony, he had a good breakfast to be thankful for.

After eating heartily, the hunter prepared to start out afoot in search of a trail that might lead him to safety. Hardly had he taken a step before he heard the clatter of hoofs. For a moment he thought another herd of buffaloes was bearing down upon him. He was not left long in suspense, for quickly there came into view a band of half-naked Comanches, some fifty in number, mounted on fine horses and well equipped with rifles, spears, and knives. They came at full gallop, sitting on their mounts as if horse and rider were one, all painted and plumed, a sight at once beautiful and alarming. At their head rode three old squaws who made a noise with their mouths that was a fair imitation of trumpets. As they dashed up, they

divided into two lines. Each line wheeled in a half circle and in a moment Crockett was surrounded. The leader then dismounted and walked up to where the hunter stood. The latter held his rifle in readiness for action if the strangers showed fight. The Indian's eye caught the beauty of the weapon, and then Crockett began to fear the chief was about to appropriate it for himself.

"The chief," Crockett says, "was for making love to my beautiful Betsey, but I clung fast to her and, assuming an air of composure, I demanded whether their nation was at war with the Americans. 'No,' was the reply. 'Do you like the Americans?' 'Yes, they are our friends.' 'Where do you get your spearheads, your rifles, your blankets, and your knives?' 'Get them from our friends, the Americans.' 'Well, do you think if you were passing through their nation, as I am passing through yours, they would attempt to rob you of your property?' 'No, they would feed me, and protect me; and the Comanche will do the same by his white brother.'"

Crockett then asked how they had discovered him, and the chief replied that they had seen the smoke from his fire. The Indian inquired how the hunter happened to be there alone and Davy told his story. The redskin gave a little chuckling

laugh over the trick the mustang had played, and then said that as Crockett was a brave man he should have a horse; whereupon he ordered a fine young animal to be brought forward.

Crockett, accompanied by the Indians, went to look for his saddle and bridle; but on reaching the spot where he had left it, he found one of the three squaws eating the remains of his goose, while another one was making off with his saddle as fast as she could. The chief, however, put a stop to her thieving.

Meanwhile, other Indians had discovered the dead cougar and were skinning it. The many knife wounds in its body showed the desperate nature of the fight. This so won the admiration of the Indians that they called the hunter "brave man," and the chief asked him to join the tribe. Davy declined the invitation, and asked to be shown the way to the Colorado River. The request was granted, and the entire party set off, led by the three squaws, who, as Davy says, "kept up a continuous braying."

Crockett himself describes this ride with the Indians as one of continuous pleasure. He enlivened the way by telling the chief stories of his adventures, and the Indians amply repaid him by exhibitions of their horsemanship which excited

his admiration, for the Comanches were among the finest riders in the world. They lived in a country over which roamed great droves of wild horses, and they were expert throwers of the lasso, so they always had fine mounts. Even the children and the women could spring unaided to the backs of half-tamed horses; and, without any saddle, and with only a twist of grass for a bridle, could perform astonishing feats of horsemanship.

On the ride they came upon a drove of wild horses led by a beautiful stallion. At once an Indian grasped his lasso and, riding cautiously forward, attempted to secure a prize, but the wily animals, with heads and tails aloft, followed their leader in a great circle about the Indian, and then, striking off at a furious gallop, disappeared beyond a knoll to the west. But one, a mustang, remained behind. The Indian swung his right arm above his head. The rope uncoiled and the noose fell true, but the pony had ducked his head between his legs and was free. Strange to say, however, he did not move, but allowed the Indian to approach and take him.

On coming up, Crockett found it was his own mustang that had played the trick on him the night before. He says that the animal on seeing him cast down his eyes and looked sheepish! The

reason for his not running away from the lasso was explained by the chief, who said that when once a horse had been caught by a lasso, since the operation usually threw the animal violently to the ground, he never forgot it, and did not care to repeat the experience.

A few hours later they came upon a herd of buffaloes and all took up the chase. Only one was brought to earth, however, and that was by Davy's rifle. This brought him more praise from the Indians, as he had now proved himself not only a brave man but a good shot. That night they built several big fires, cut up the meat into steaks and chops, and sitting about the fires, they roasted it and feasted upon it till the embers died down; then wrapped in their blankets, they slept the sleep of peace. The next morning they reached the Colorado River. They had to go down its course a few miles to strike the trail to San Antonio. While proceeding along the banks of the stream, the quick eye of the Indian chief discovered smoke rising in the distance. Quickly, as before, the party divided into two lines and, galloping forward, encircled the fire before they were discovered. Crockett and the chief advanced together to find a solitary man,—none other than Thimblorig! Crockett was overjoyed at the dis-

covery and quickly introduced him to the chief as his friend.

Here the Indians left Crockett, but not before he had given their leader a fine bowie knife. The chief summoned his followers about him and at a signal the redskins broke into a pandemonium of whoops, accompanied by the fearful squawking of all the women. The incident gives an example of the true friendship and hospitality of which the native American Indian, when treated like a human being, was capable. Crockett says of this chief that "he was the politest person he ever met excepting one man he met in New York."

To add to Crockett's satisfaction, the bee-hunter had joined Thimblorig during his absence. The hunter had returned laden with honey, and just then he was out hunting something for their supper. Great was the bee-hunter's joy, on returning with a fat turkey, to find Crockett. While the three were partaking of a savory supper, two horsemen were seen approaching. They were in a hostile country, so they made ready their rifles to give them a hot reception; but in a moment it was discovered that the newcomers were the pirate and the young Indian. The five men were glad to join forces, for at any time they might expect to meet with armed Mexicans. The next morning

they set out for San Antonio. Nothing of interest happened until, when about twenty miles from the end of their journey, they saw approaching a band of some twenty "greasers" on horseback. At once the five dismounted and stood behind their horses, awaiting the attack.

When within a few hundred yards of them, the leader of the Mexicans demanded in Spanish that they surrender. We will let Colonel Crockett tell what then happened:—

"‘There will be a brush with those blackguards,’ said the pirate. ‘Now each of you single out your man for the first fire, and they are greater fools than I take them for if they give us a chance for a second shot. Colonel, just settle the business with that talking fellow with the red feather, he’s worth any three of the party.’

"‘Surrender, or we fire,’ shouted the fellow with the red feather. The pirate shouted, . . . ‘Fire away.’ And sure enough they took his advice, for the next minute we were saluted with a discharge of musketry, the report of which was so loud that we were convinced they all had fired. Before the smoke had cleared away we had each selected our man and fired; and I never did see such a scattering among their ranks as followed. We beheld several mustangs running wild without their riders over the prairie, and the balance of the company were already retreating at a more rapid gait than they approached. We hastily mounted and commenced pursuit which we kept up until we beheld the independent flag flying from the battlement of the for-

tress of Alamo, our place of destination. The fugitives succeeded in evading our pursuit, and we rode up to the gates of the fortress, announced to the sentinel who we were, and the gates were thrown open. We entered amid shouts of welcome bestowed upon us by the patriots."

CHAPTER XVI

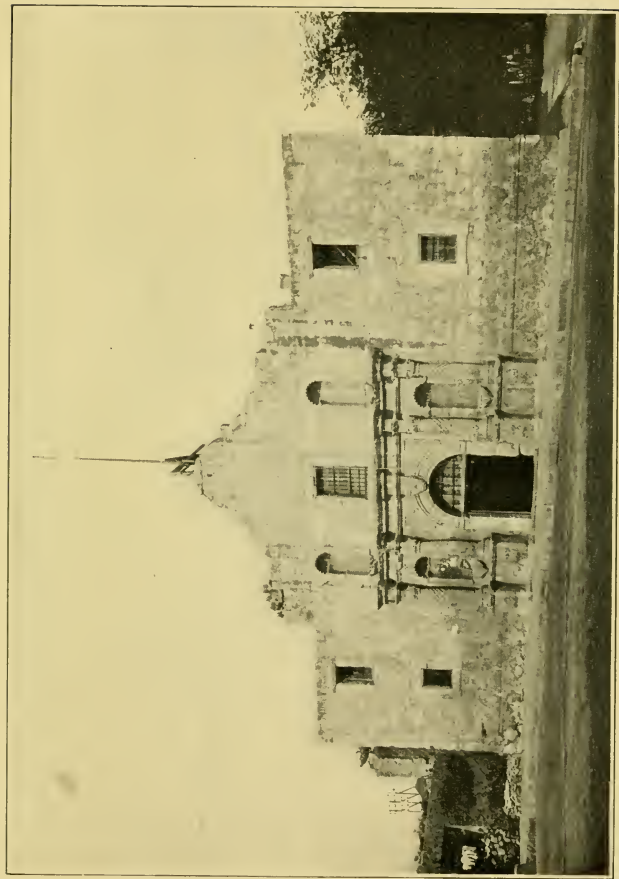
“REMEMBER THE ALAMO”

THE story of the Alamo, which we have now reached, is hard to tell if the story-writer desires to be truthful, because no one who saw all that happened on those glorious but awful days in February and March of 1836 survived to tell the tale.

The Alamo was a strong fortress on the river in the outskirts of the town of San Antonio. It contained a garrison of about one hundred and fifty soldiers. The town itself was inhabited by about twelve hundred Mexicans and a few Americans. It had been taken from the Mexicans by the Americans on December 10, 1835, when, in a battle lasting five days and five nights, General Burleson, with two hundred and sixteen Texans, overpowered seventeen hundred Mexicans in the town, and drove the Mexican general into the Alamo, just outside the town, where he hoisted the white flag. The Texans with great satisfaction accepted the surrender, for they were out of powder, and hoisted on the ramparts the flag of Independent Texas.

It was only a few weeks after the taking of the Alamo that Colonel Crockett and his four companions passed through its gates and were welcomed by the garrison. The fame of Crockett had preceded him, and every one felt that the famous scout alone was worth a dozen men, and men were sadly needed; for, as their scouts had reported, Santa Anna, the president of the Mexican Republic, was near at hand, at the head of an army of sixteen hundred Mexicans. It was composed of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, and accompanied by some of his best generals.

The commander of the fortress was Colonel William B. Travis, a gallant and impetuous officer, who like Crockett never stopped to count the numbers of his enemies but always "went ahead." Another of the immortal band of Alamo defenders was Colonel James Bowie, one of two Louisiana brothers who were among the ablest and bravest fighters for independence this country has known. It was after these brothers that the "bowie knife" was named. Davy says that he was introduced to Colonel Bowie by Colonel Travis, and was conversing with him when Bowie had occasion to draw his famous knife to cut a strap, and that "the very sight of it was enough to give a man of squeamish stomach the colic, especially before breakfast."



THE ALAMO, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.

"If there is anything in this world particularly worth living for, it is freedom; anything that would render death to a brave man particularly pleasant, it is freedom," — Davy Crockett.

The remainder of the garrison was made up of as desperate and daring spirits as ever drew a weapon. There was not a coward among them. But one spirit appeared to animate them, and that was — liberty or death!

Before the battle, in which they had every reason to expect death, they were each given the choice of going or staying, but not a man marched out of the Alamo.

On February 20, a hunter brought in word that some Indians had told him that Santa Anna was within a few days' march. Others came in saying that the Mexicans were endeavoring to incite the Indians to join them, but without effect. These reports set the garrison to work “as lively as Dutch cheese in dog days,” as Crockett says.

Three days later — February 23 — the Mexicans came in sight, marching in regular order, their blood-red banner flying to denote no quarter to the enemy, their swords and muskets gleaming, their band playing. All this to impress the enemy. But it was of no avail; the Americans were made of stuff too stern to be frightened by noise and glitter.

Seeing the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, Colonel Travis withdrew his men from the town and entered the fortress which they made ready to

defend to the last. Already ammunition, arms, and provisions had been stored within its walls.

As soon as the gates were shut, the garrison hoisted its flag, — thirteen stripes, red and white alternately, on a blue ground, with a large white star of five points in the center, and between the points the letters of the word T-E-X-A-S. At the raising of the flag the bee-hunter, as Crockett says, burst forth in a song that made the blood tingle.

“Up with your banner, Freedom,
Thy champions cling to thee ;
They’ll follow where’er you lead ’em
To death, or victory —
Up with your banner, Freedom.

“Tyrants and slaves are rushing
To tread thee in the dust ;
Their blood will soon be gushing,
And stain our knives with rust ;
But not thy banner, Freedom.

“While stars and stripes are flying,
Our blood we’ll freely shed ;
No groan will ’scape the dying,
Seeing thee o’er his head ; —
Up with your banner, Freedom.”

Then followed three lusty cheers amid the beating of drums and the stirring notes of the trumpets.

That same afternoon Santa Anna sent a messenger from the town demanding unconditional surrender, and threatening death by the sword to every man in case of refusal. The answer to the demand was a cannon shot.

Colonel Travis now asked for a volunteer to go to Goliad, four days' journey distant, to ask for reënforcements from Colonel Fannin. The old pirate offered himself and was accepted, and at nightfall he set out.

The following day, February 24, the Mexicans began the erection of a battery on the bank of the river, and by the afternoon were getting the range with their cannon at a distance of three hundred and fifty yards. That evening thirty reënforcements arrived from Gonzales, as Crockett says, "just in time to reap a harvest of glory; but there is some prospect of sweating blood before we gather it in."

That afternoon an accident happened to Thimble-ig. While sitting in an exposed position, amusing himself with the old trick with which he was wont to get money from innocent victims, a three-ounce ball glanced from the parapet, and striking him on the breast, made a painful though not a dangerous wound. Davy extracted the ball and advised the fellow to wear it for a watch charm.

"No, Colonel," he replied, "lead is too scarce and I'll lend it out at compound interest."

At early dawn on the morning of February 25 the enemy began firing, but they were poor marksmen and did no damage, while more than one of their number were toppled over by the keen sharpshooters within the fortress. Some of the shots from the Mexican guns coming uncomfortably close to Colonel Crockett's bed, he got up and went out to find Thimbleric peppering the enemy all by himself, "paying his debts," he said, "interest and all." He had melted the grapeshot into four balls, and with each one of these he had brought down a "greaser." By this time the enemy had so disposed themselves that they had the fortress entirely surrounded. All hope of reënforcements was gone. It was now left for the members of the devoted band of Americans to resist to the utmost and sell their lives at the highest price.

At this time Colonel Bowie was taken ill. This loss to the fighting strength of the garrison was equal to the loss of a dozen men. The bee-hunter, we are told, was the owner of a fine rifle, and he was almost as good a shot as Crockett himself. Colonel Bowie, who knew him of old, said that Crockett could not have a braver companion, and that

with fifteen hundred such men he would undertake to march to Mexico City and capture the stronghold of Santa Anna. Davy says that the bee-hunter brought down eleven of the enemy at such a distance that the others thought it a waste of ammunition to try.

On this day the bee-hunter headed a small party that sallied forth in search of wood and water. They were attacked by three times their number, but got back in safety. The bee-hunter, it will be recalled, carried a Bible that had been given him by his sweetheart, Katy, whose home was in Nacogdoches. He read a portion of it every night before going to bed. That night, on opening the book, he found a bullet embedded in it.

"See here, Colonel," he said to Crockett, "how they have treated the valued present of my dear little Kate of Nacogdoches." "It has saved your life," said the Colonel. "True," he replied, more serious than usual, "and I am not the first sinner whose life has been saved by this book." Crockett says he heard the man thank God in prayer that night for his escape from death, and he did not fail to mention "his Kate."

Soon provisions began to run short in the fortress, and the Mexicans were making every effort to cut off the water supply. They were also scour-

ing the surrounding country, burning houses, stealing crops, and murdering men, women, and children. Santa Anna had threatened to convert the country into a howling wilderness and was making good his threat. There was no outrage brutal enough to satisfy this treacherous and cruel soldier. Crockett longed for just one crack at the rascal, saying that if he could get it, even at a hundred yards, he would agree to break his beloved Betsey and never pull trigger again. The Mexicans, now becoming more venturesome, were bringing their cannon nearer and nearer to the fortress.

On the morning of February 29, Crockett awoke to find that a gun was getting a more than usually good aim at the part of the building where he slept. Quickly dressing, he grabbed his rifle and ran to a point of vantage, there to discover that during the night the enemy had planted a gun within rifle-shot of the fort. At that very moment the gunner was lighting a match to discharge it. Crockett took quick aim and the gunner dropped. Another ran forward and took the match from the victim's hand, and just as he was about to apply it, Davy, with another rifle handed him by a comrade, plucked him; a third suffered the same fate, and a fourth and a fifth. And then the gun was abandoned.

By March 1 the Mexicans had lost three hundred men, but their numbers were rapidly increasing, since almost daily reënforcements came to them from across the border.

The Americans were fully conscious of their desperate condition. They were outnumbered nearly twenty to one. Colonel Bowie was still too ill to fight. Provisions were almost gone, and no hope remained of their being rescued by their countrymen.

On March 2 the patriots of Texas (but not the doomed heroes of the Alamo) met in the town of New Washington and framed the Texas Declaration of Independence. Crockett writes in his diary on that day :—

“We have given over all hopes of receiving assistance from Goliad or Refugio. Colonel Travis harangued the garrison, and concluded by exhorting them, in case the enemy should carry the fort, to fight to the last gasp, and render their victory even more serious to them than to us. This was followed by three cheers.”

We shall give the story of March 4 and 5 in Davy's own words as they appear in his diary, since they are the last recorded words of our sturdy patriot :—

“March 4 : Shells have been falling into the fort like hail during the day, but without effect. About dusk, in the eve-

ning, we observed a man running toward the fort, pursued by about half a dozen of the Mexican cavalry. The bee-hunter immediately knew him to be the old pirate who had gone to Goliad, and, calling to the two hunters, he sallied out of the fort to the relief of the old man, who was hard pressed. I followed close after. Before we reached the spot the Mexicans were close on the heel of the old man, who stopped suddenly, turned short upon his pursuers, discharged his rifle, and one of the enemy fell from his horse. The chase was renewed, but finding that he would be overtaken and cut to pieces, he now turned again, and, to the amazement of the enemy, became the assailant in his turn. He clubbed his gun, and dashed among them like a wounded tiger, and they fled like sparrows. By this time we reached the spot, and, in the ardor of the moment, followed some distance before we saw that our retreat to the fort was cut off by another detachment of cavalry. Nothing was to be done but to fight our way through. We were all of the same mind. 'Go ahead!' cried I, and they shouted, 'Go ahead, Colonel!' We dashed among them, and a bloody conflict ensued. They were about twenty in number, and they stood their ground. After the fight had continued about five minutes, a detachment was seen issuing from the fort to our relief, and the Mexicans scampered off, leaving eight of their comrades dead upon the field. But we did not escape unscathed, for both the pirate and the bee-hunter were mortally wounded, and I received a saber cut across the forehead. The old man died, without speaking, as soon as we entered the fort. We bore my young friend to his bed, dressed his wounds, and I watched beside him. He lay, without complaint or manifesting pain, until about midnight, when he spoke, and I asked him if he wanted anything. 'Nothing,'

he replied, but drew a sigh that seemed to rend his heart, as he added, 'Poor Kate of Nacogdoches!' His eyes were filled with tears as he continued, 'Her words were prophetic, Colonel'; and then he sang in a low voice that resembled the sweet notes of his own devoted Kate,

'But toom cam' the saddle, all bluidy to see,
And hame cam' the steed, but hame never cam' he.'

He spoke no more, and a few minutes after, died. Poor Kate, who will tell this to thee?

"March 5. Pop, pop, pop! Bom, bom, bom! throughout the day. No time for memorandums now. Go ahead! Liberty and independence forever!"

On March 5 Colonel Travis again asked if there were any who wished to go while yet there was a chance for escape, but not a man showed the white feather. During the afternoon of that day a Comanche arrow dropped into the fort, having been shot by some friend on the outside, and to it was attached a copy of the official order issued to the Mexican troops for the attack of the morrow.

On Sunday morning, March 6, the end came. At four in the morning the Mexican bugles were heard and the little garrison at once flew to their stations, for they knew it to be the signal for the general attack. With the first streak of dawn the enemy, four thousand in number, came pouring forward, led in person by Santa Anna, their band

playing the Dequello, which meant no quarter. The savage Mexican leader had placed his infantry in columns and surrounded them with his cavalry, who with drawn sabers were ordered to drive the fighters on, and prevent any attempt at retreat.

By six o'clock the division of the Mexicans under General Castrillon gained an entrance to one part of the fortress. At the same time the larger part of the attacking force were twice repulsed on the north front; on a third attack they reached the walls, against which they placed their scaling ladders. The first to scale the ladders were hurled to the earth by the murderous fire of the Texans who, barricaded behind bags of dirt along the parapet and in the doors and windows, fought like demons. Officers of the attacking force, with drawn swords, stood at the bottom of the ladders, compelling others to take the places of those who fell. So fast did the Mexicans finally swarm over the parapets that the brave defenders had no time to reload their guns, of which every fighter had several. In this dilemma, they grasped their guns by the barrel and laid about them right and left, felling a "greaser" at every blow.

Perhaps few combats in history equal in fury the fight in the Alamo. There was the crack of musketry, the boom of heavy ordnance, the

shrieks of the wounded and dying, the savage commands of the officers, the yells of defiance, and with it all the fierce music of the Mexican band as it rang out the cruel *Dequello*.

The survivors now took refuge in the main building and the long, two-story barracks that was being used as a hospital. Every room became the scene of desperate hand-to-hand encounters, the Mexicans with swords and bayonets, the Texans with the butts of their guns and their long knives. One by one the forlorn remnant, backed against the walls by the pressure of superior numbers, fell fighting to the earth. As the Mexicans rushed into the room occupied by the sick and wounded, they were met by a volley of pistol shots from the poor fellows who lifted themselves on their cots to fire their weapons. Every shot laid one of the enemy low. Then others, pushing in over the dead bodies of their comrades, fell upon the doomed men, who had staggered to their feet, and cut them down without mercy. In some such way died the heroic Bowie.

Colonel Travis fell from the parapet where he was directing the firing of a cannon, pierced by a Mexican bullet.

And how fared Davy Crockett? We wish it might be known just how the hero of this story

died, but no one survived to relate the facts exactly as they occurred. A woman, a certain Mrs. Dickinson, who was in the fort at the time, and whose life was spared, says the last she saw of Colonel Crockett was his mutilated body lying near the main walls of the Alamo.

Others tell the story thus: When the defenders were reduced to six, Crockett among the number, they were asked to surrender and a promise to spare their lives was given. Further resistance being useless, they gave themselves up and were taken before Santa Anna in the courtyard. Crockett marched into the presence of the Mexican chief with a steady step and a stern face. General Castrillon addressed his chief: "Sir, here are six prisoners I have taken alive. How shall I dispose of them?" Santa Anna, casting a fierce glance at his general (or turning his back without a word, as another writer says), replied, "Have I not told you before how to dispose of them? Why do you bring them to me?" At this the officers standing about drew their swords. Crockett, enraged at this act of treachery, sprang like a tiger at the Mexican chief, but was stopped by a dozen sword points that found his heart. And in like manner at the same moment died his five companions.

Still other historians declare that this account is

fanciful, and that Crockett died as did the others, in his tracks, his back to a wall and his face to the foe, grasping the stock of his beloved Betsey, giving and asking no quarter. This is most in line with Davy Crockett's nature, and is probably nearer the truth.

During the siege and the assault the Mexicans lost more than fifteen hundred men. Every American in the fortress, save two women and two servants, or one hundred and eighty-seven of the bravest men God ever made, fell for the lone-star flag of Texas. Their bodies were heaped in the courtyard and burned. The tricolor of Mexico was flung to the breeze. But that same breeze, wafting to every American fireside the cruel, bloody story, brought back the avenging cry, "Remember the Alamo," and sounded the death-knell of Mexican rule above the Rio Grande.

Thus lived, and thus died, this child of poverty, the unschooled, sturdy hunter, the sure shot, valiant scout, jovial companion, loyal friend, uncompromising enemy, pure patriot and martyr to freedom — Davy Crockett.

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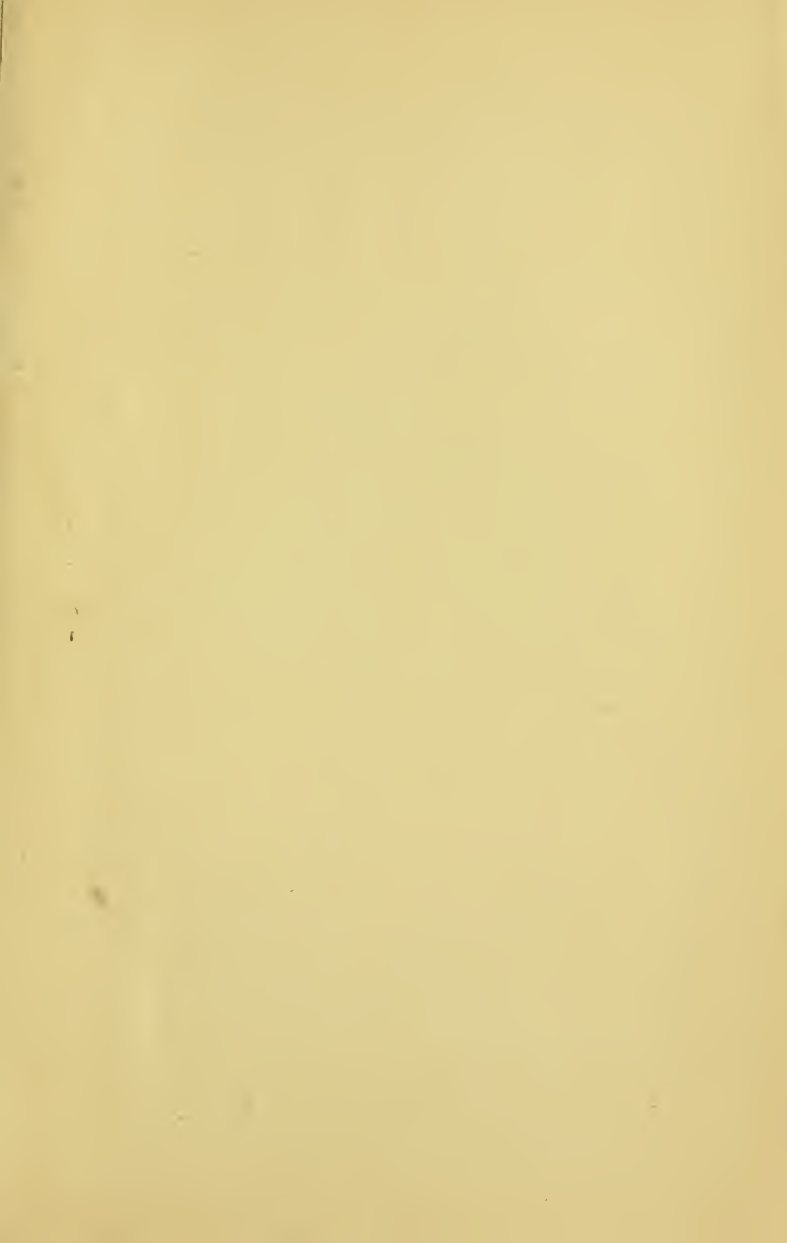
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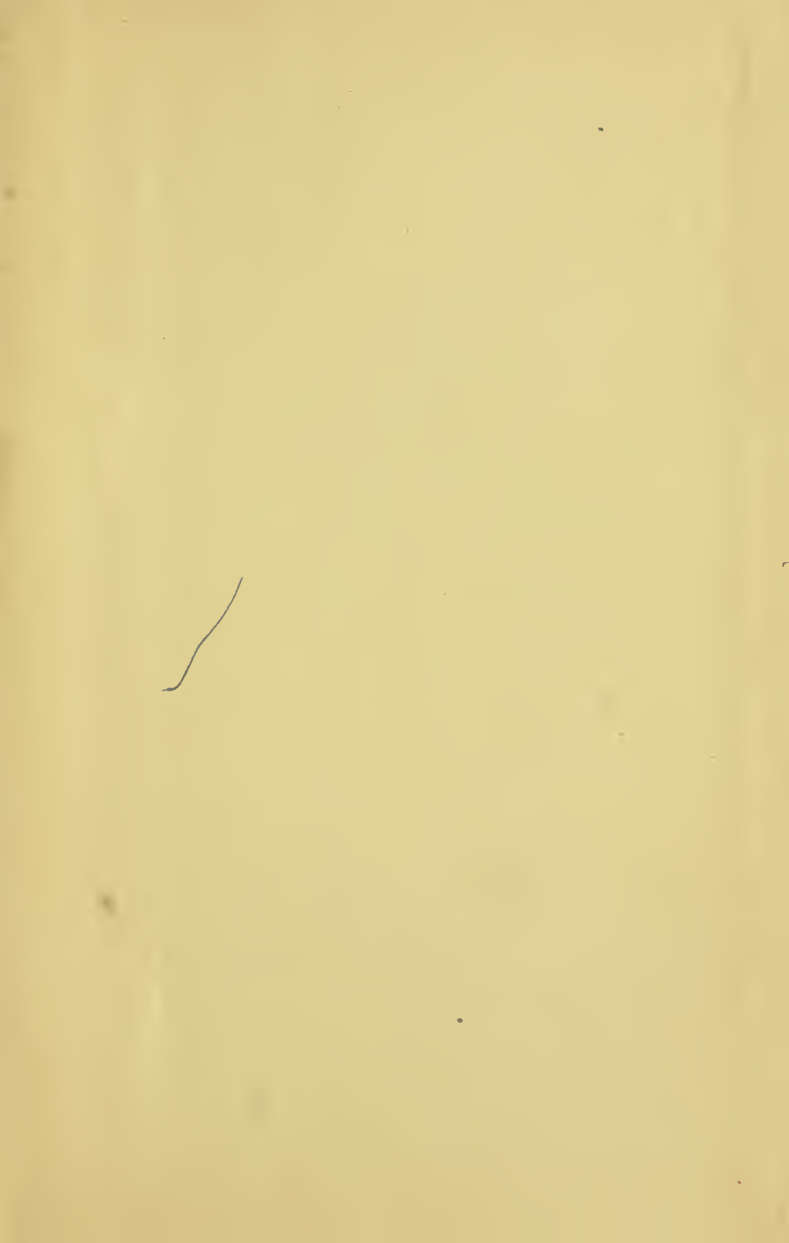
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